

Title of the course:

2018-09-01

Sociology of Food in Sweden

Instructor:

Nicklas Neuman, PhD

Course Description:

Food and eating are omnipresent in our society. As social phenomena, they can guide our understanding for human decision making, the social organization of everyday life, differences in behavior among social group, status and prestige between paid and unpaid work, relations of consumption and production, the construction of ethnic and national identities, and more.

In this course we will take our departure in sociology—the science of social phenomena—in order to examine food and eating in the Swedish society, both past and present.

Attention will be given to basic sociological concepts applied to Swedish politics, history, and culture, all analyzed through the lens of food and eating. We will focus on six domains:

1. The everyday life of individuals, i.e., their eating patterns, domestic foodwork, and family lives.
2. Commensality and eating alone, particularly with a focus on Swedish family politics and the notion of “lonely Swedes”
3. Differences in eating patterns and diet-related health among social groups (e.g. gender and social class).
4. The welfare state, such as meals in schools and the eldercare.
5. National, regional and ethnic identities, focusing primarily on “Sweden – the new culinary nation” and “New Nordic Cuisine”.
6. Environmental politics, with a consumption-sociological perspective on Swedish consumption patterns and climate change.

Pre-requisite: one course in Sociology, Anthropology, or Public Policy.

Intended Learning Outcomes:

Having successfully finished this course, the student is expected to demonstrate an understanding in:

- ...how basic sociological concepts can be applied to food-related social phenomena in the Swedish culture and society, in the present and in the past.
- ...the social differentiation of food consumption and (paid and unpaid) foodwork between individuals and groups
- ...the role of the welfare state in public-health policies and public-meal provision.
- ...how Swedish politics in the present and the past, such as environmental politics and gender-equality policies, are connected with contemporary food-related phenomena
- ...how food is a means to construct regional, ethnic and national identities.

General Classroom Norms:

The classroom is a space for open academic discussion where ideas are allowed to be expressed freely, but always in a reciprocally courteous and respectful manner. Class-participation assessments are based not only on how often and well students speak out on the class material, but also on how well they listen to each other.

Students are also expected to come to class prepared, having read the readings due and have questions or comments prepared in advance.

Week One (January 24)**Title:**

The sociology of food and eating: International and Nordic developments from early 1900s to the present.

Location:

Room XX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Course information
- A brief round of presentations based on a summary of your submitted text (see “Assignment” below)
- What does a “sociology of food” mean, and what does it entail academically?
- Historical summary of influential texts and scholars
- Food studies and the sociology of food – a division of academic labor between North America and the UK
- A specific look at the Nordic developments from the 1990s up until today
- Time for questions and group discussion about the readings

Readings:

- Mennell, S., Murcott, A., & van Otterloo, A. (1992). Introduction: Significance and Theoretical Orientations. *Current Sociology*, 20(2), 1-19.
- Mintz, S. W., & Bois, C. M. D. (2002). The Anthropology of Food and Eating. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31(1), 99-119.
- Warde, A. (2015). On the sociology of eating. *Revue d'Etudes en Agriculture et Environnement*, 96(01), 7-15.

Assignment:

Before this classroom session, you will have submitted a short introduction about yourself, including (1) previous academic background, (2) the reason(s) for taking this course, (3), your expectations of the course, and (4) why you think that your previous knowledge, life experiences, interestes, and so forth can contribute to making the course better. Each student will also briefly summarize her/his text to the class.

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on January 23.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: 200-400 words (please respect this word range)

Week Two (January 31).**Title:**

Why do we eat the way we do? Individual decision-making and social-group differentiation

Location:

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Possibility for questions and clarifications about the course so far
- About decision-making in the social sciences – “standard economic” assumptions of rational choice, behavioral economics and contemporary sociology of consumption
- Individual eating behavior – are we rational?
- Class and gender differentiations of eating patterns
- The gendered division of domestic foodwork
- Sociological explanations; theories of class and gender
- Time for questions and discussions based on your texts (see “Assignment” below)

Readings:

- Flemmen, M., Hjellbrekke, J., & Jarness, V. (2018). Class, Culture and Culinary Tastes: Cultural Distinctions and Social Class Divisions in Contemporary Norway. *Sociology*, 52(1), 128-149.
- Meah, A. (2014). Reconceptualizing power and gendered subjectivities in domestic cooking spaces. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(5), 671-690. doi: 10.1177/0309132513501404
- Neuman, N. (2016). *Stories of masculinity, gender equality, and culinary progress: On foodwork, cooking, and men in Sweden*. Uppsala: Acta

Universitatis Upsaliensis. **ONLY PAGES 32-40**. Available here:
<http://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:974090/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

- Neuman, N., Eli, K., & Nowicka, P. (Forthcoming). Feeding the extended family: Gender, generation, and socioeconomic disadvantage in food provision to children. *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*.

Assignment:

Before this classroom session, you will have submitted a personal reflection on the readings. You are not expected to review methods, findings, theoretical arguments etc., only to briefly summarize (1) what you have learned, (2) what you found most interesting, and (3) something that you would like to criticize. Please feel free to strengthen your criticism with other sources. In addition to this, you should also (4) formulate a question, based on the readings, that could be raised for discussion in the group.

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on January 30.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: 300-500 words (please respect this word range)

Week Three (February 7).**Title:**

Commensality: Eating together and eating alone

Location:

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- The concept of commensality and the sociality of eating
- Is it better to eat together?
- Is it bad to eat alone?
- Are Swedish people lonely!?
- What do we learn from different disciplines?
- Time for questions and discussions

Readings:

- Andersen, S. S., Holm, L., & Baarts, C. (2015). School meal sociality or lunch pack individualism? Using an intervention study to compare the social impacts of school meals and packed lunches from home. *Social Science Information*, 54(3), 394–416.
- Cruwys, T., Bevelander, K. E., & Hermans, R. C. J. (2015). Social modeling of eating: A review of when and why social influence affects food intake and choice. *Appetite*, 86, 3-18.
- Fischler, C. (2011). Commensality, society and culture. *Social Science Information*, 50(3-4), 528-548.
- Sobal, J., Bove, C. F., & Rauschenbach, B. S. (2002). Commensal careers at entry into marriage: establishing commensal units and managing commensal circles. *The Sociological Review*, 50(3), 378-397.

- Yates, L., & Warde, A. (2017). Eating together and eating alone: meal arrangements in British households. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 68(1), 97-118.

Assignment:

Before this classroom session, you will have submitted a personal reflection on the readings. You are not expected to review methods, findings, theoretical arguments etc., only to briefly summarize (1) what you have learned, (2) what you found most interesting, and (3) something that you would like to criticize. Please feel free to strengthen your criticism with other sources. In addition to this, you should also (4) formulate a question, based on the readings, that could be raised for discussion in the group.

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on February 6.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: 300-500 words (please respect this word range)

Week Four (February 14).

Title:

Food and the welfare state: Eating and foodwork in the public sector

Location:

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Developments of public foodservice in Sweden
- Welfare state politics
- Examples from studies of Swedish public-meal foodservice today
- Time for questions and discussions

Readings:

- Gullberg, E. (2006). Food for Future Citizens: School Meal Culture in Sweden. *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 9(3), 337-343.
doi:10.2752/155280106778813279
- Hirdman, Y. (1992). Utopia in the Home. *International Journal of Political Economy*, 22(2), 5-99. **ONLY CHAPTERS 3, 4 and 5 (pp. 27-87).**
- Mattsson Sydner, Y., & Fjellström, C. (2007). Illuminating the (non-)meaning of food: organization, power and responsibilities in public elderly care – a Swedish perspective. *Journal of Foodservice*, 18(3), 119-129. doi:doi:10.1111/j.1745-4506.2007.00056.x
- Persson Osowski, C., Göranson, H., Fjellström, C. (2010). Perceptions and Memories of the Free School Meal in Sweden. *Food, Culture and Society: An International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 13(4), 555-572.

Assignment:

After this classroom session, you are expected to do a short interview with a person born and raised in Sweden about food in the public sector. It can be about pre-school, ground-school, hospitals, the eldercare, and even prison. It can be based on her/his own experience or that of a friend, family member, etc.

The interview can be in the form of both text conversations (E-mail, Facebook messenger, etc.) and recorded face-to-face conversations. If you choose the latter, you do not have to transcribe anything except for direct quotations.

Required format: You should ask at least four questions, with at least one focusing on how they view the public meal as part of Swedish society and culture.

Week Five (February 21)

Title:

Food and national identity: Gastronationalism, cuisine, and culinary Nordicness/Swedishness

Location:

Room 328

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Introduction to your fieldwork assignment
- Basic concepts: nation as “imagined community” and “banal nationalism”
- What is “cuisine”?
- Research on food and national identity
- On the concept of “gastronationalism”?
- New Nordic Cuisine
- “Sweden – The new culinary nation”
- Time for questions and discussions

Readings:

- DeSoucey, M. (2010). Gastronationalism: Food Traditions and Authenticity Politics in the European Union. *American Sociological Review*, 75(3), 432-455.
- Jönsson, H. (2013). The road to the New Nordic Kitchen: Examples from Sweden. In P. Lysaght (Ed.), *The return of traditional food* (pp. 53-67). Lund: Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, Lund University.
Available here: <http://portal.research.lu.se/ws/files/3761338/4053890.pdf>
- Leer, J. (2016). The rise and fall of the New Nordic Cuisine. *Aesthetics and Culture*, 8.

- Neuman, N. (2018). An imagined culinary community: stories of morality and masculinity in “Sweden – the new culinary nation”. *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*, 18(2), 149-162.
- Neuman, N., & Leer, J. (2018). Nordic Cuisine but National Identities “New Nordic Cuisine” and the gastronationalist projects of Denmark and Sweden. *Anthropology of Food*, (13).

Assignment:

Each group will carry out a minor fieldwork about food in Swedish marketing and/or media and how this relates to their interpretations of the Swedish people, society, or culture. The discussion must not be “scientific” in the sense that your interpretations need support by data. **FOR MORE DETAILS ABOUT THE ASSIGNMENT, SEE APPENDIX 1.**

Required format of presentation: a ten minutes long presentation in PowerPoint, where each student should take part, plus five minutes for questions and comments from the audience.

Optional props: If you want to, it is also okay to complement your presentation with props of different kinds (e.g. food packages or products, magazines, leaflets etc.).

Week Six (February 28)

Title:

Food consumption and climate change: Swedish environmental politics and the sociology of consumption

Location:

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Food and climate effects, a crash course.
- Swedish food-consumption patterns and climate change
- Swedish environmental politics.
- Consumption-sociological perspectives on sustainable consumption and behavioral-change policies.
- Time for questions and discussions about readings.

Readings:

- Bryngelsson, D., Wirsenius, S., Hedenus, F., & Sonesson, U. (2016). How can the EU climate targets be met? A combined analysis of technological and demand-side changes in food and agriculture. *Food Policy*, 59, 152-164.
- Geels, F. W., McMeekin, A., Mylan, J., & Southerton, D. (2015). A critical appraisal of Sustainable Consumption and Production research: The reformist, revolutionary and reconfiguration positions. *Global Environmental Change*, 34, 1-12.
- Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). (2014). *Climate change 2014: Mitigation of climate change*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
ONLY "Summary for Policymakers". Available here:

https://www.ipcc.ch/pdf/assessment-report/ar5/wg3/ipcc_wg3_ar5_summary-for-policymakers.pdf

- Warde, A. (2017). Sustainable Consumption: Practices, Habits and Politics. *Consumption: A Sociological Analysis* (pp. 181-204). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. Available here: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/978-1-137-55682-0_9

Assignment:

Before the classroom session, you will have submitted the report from your interview about Swedish public meals. It should include (1) a presentation of the interview subject (although no names!), (2) what you chose to interview her/him about and why, (3) a summary of your conversation (supported with quotes), and (4) a final reflection, based on your own interview findings and the readings, about public-sector meals in Sweden.

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on February 27.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: 400-600 words (please respect this word range)

Week Seven (March 7):**Title:**

Media and marketing: The Swedish society through the lens of food

Location:

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Introduction to your Research Papers
- Group presentations. 10 minutes' presentation + 5 minutes for questions and comments from the audience
- Time for discussion about readings

Readings:

- Jallinoja, P., Jauho, M., & Mäkelä, J. (2016). Newspaper debates on milk fats and vegetable oils in Finland, 1978–2013: An analysis of conflicts over risks, expertise, evidence and pleasure. *Appetite*, 105, 274-282.
- Johnston, J., & Goodman, M. K. (2015). Spectacular Foodscapes: Food Celebrities and the Politics of Lifestyle Mediation in an Age of Inequality. *Food, Culture & Society*, 18(2), 205-222.
- Parasecoli, F. (2005). Feeding hard bodies: food and masculinities in men's fitness magazines. *Food and Foodway*, 13(1-2), 17-37.
- van Hooft, J., Patterson, C., Löf, M., Alexandrou, C., Hilton, S., & Nimegeer, A. (2018). Media framing and construction of childhood obesity: a content analysis of Swedish newspapers. *Obesity Science & Practice*, 4(1), 4-13.
- Neuman, N., Gottzén, L., & Fjellström, C. (Forthcoming). Distinctions and boundaries: Men's talk about food celebrities. *British Food Journal*.

Assignment:

Before this classroom session, you will have submitted an abstract for your Research Paper. The abstract should include (1) a very brief background, (2) your research questions, (3) your study aim, (4) your methodology, (5) and the expected knowledge contribution from your work. **FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE APPENDIX 2.**

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on March 6.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: 200-400 words, not including references (please respect this word range)

Week Eight (March 14)**Title:** Feedback session for Research Paper**Location:**

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Time for questions about the Research Paper assignment
- Brief progress reports followed by comments from the audience and discussions about the different paper projects.

Readings:

- All submitted abstracts from your course mates

Assignment:

Before this classroom session, you will have read all the submitted abstracts and submitted at least one question or comment per abstract.

This should be a constructive question/comment with the intent of helping your course mate. Focus on what you find interesting in your course mates' ideas and then try to push them in a direction that will improve the ideas even more. Some questions/comments will inevitably be repeated by several students, but this is not a problem. On the contrary, this usually means that there is really something for the author to thinking a bit extra about.

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on March 13.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: One question/comment per abstract.

Week Nine (March 21)**Title:** Consultation about Research Paper**Location:**

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Possibility for consultation with teacher and discussion with course mates about the progress of the Research paper

Readings:

No readings

Assignment:

No assignment

Spring Break (March 25 – April 4)

Week Ten (April 11)

Title: Meat production in Sweden: A sociological analysis

Location:

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Guest lecture by Jonas Bååth, PhD in Sociology

Readings:

- Bååth, J. (2018). *Production in a state of abundance: Valuation and practice in the Swedish meat supply chain*. Uppsala: Department of Sociology, Uppsala University. **ONLY SELECTED PARTS (WILL BE DITROBUTED BY NICKLAS)!**

Assignment:

Before this classroom session, you will have submitted your Research Paper.
FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE APPENDIX 2.

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on April 10.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: 5000-6000 words (please respect this word range)

Week Eleven (April 18)**Title:**

Research Papers: Presentations and peer review

Location:

Room XXX

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Each papers is presented by the respective author with another student as her/his opponent

Readings:

- The paper of one of your course mates

Assignment:

Before this classroom session, you will have submitted a peer-review document about the paper you have read in which you (1) briefly summarize what the paper is about, (2) provide constructive criticism, and (3) suggest changes for the final version. **FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE APPENDIX 2.**

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on April 17.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: 400-500 words (please respect this word range)

Week Twelve (April 25)

Title: Brewery tour and final dinner

Location:

Nya Carnegiebryggeriet, Ljusslingan 15,
<https://www.nyacarnegiebryggeriet.se/en>

Time:

15.15 to 18.15

Themes:

- Informal discussion with Steven Dippel, manager and Swedish Program alumn: The changing beer culture in Sweden

Readings:

No readings

Assignment:

Before this session, you will have submitted the final revised version of your Research Paper. **FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE APPENDIX 2.**

Deadline for submission is 23:59 on April 25.

Required formatting: Times New Roman 12, 1.5 spaces

Required length of text: 5000-6000 words (please respect this word range)

Grading:	
<i>Graded activity</i>	<i>Percentage of total grade</i>
Class participation:	20%
Submission of small written assignments	20%
PowerPoint presentation about food, media and marketing	20%
Research Paper	40%