SOC 400 Food, Body and Women: Analysis of Biopolitics
Spring 2018
KUY 213
TR 12:00-1:15

Dr. Aya H. Kimura
412 Saunders
kimuraa@hawaii.edu
Office hours: by appointment

Course description
This course examines social relationships surrounding the production, distribution, preparation, and consumption of food. It explores social, economic, political, and cultural roles of what we eat and our bodies from the feminist perspectives. The first section brings feminist theories on body and biopower. We will examine ideas of being thin, being fit, and “too fat” in contemporary discourses. The second section takes a commodity analysis approach - we will use tomatoes, bananas, chicken, McDonald’s hamburgers and taro to examine race, class and gender politics behind it. Third section examines what is often called alternative agrofood initiatives - from local food, organic food to fair trade food. Final section examines the global food politics, specifically issues surrounding food aid and its relationship to global political economy, geopolitics, and scientism. Readings will include essays and books from diverse disciplines, from history, sociology, anthropology, political science, geography, political ecology, and women’s studies.

Sociology department’s SLOs (Student Learning Objectives)

1. Students will be able to evaluate sociological theories and use them to analyze and understand aspects of the social world.
2. Students will be able to collect, analyze, and interpret data, and draw valid conclusions from their analyses.
3. Students will have clear and effective verbal and written communication skills.

In this class,

1. Students will acquire skills in applying sociological concepts to issues related to food and body.
2. Students will acquire skills to describe methods employed in various studies and apply sociological concepts to different social phenomena.
3. Students will hone their oral communication skills through class discussions. Students will enhance their writing skill through in-class writing assignments and essays.

Grading will be based on the following assignments.

1. Midterm exam: 30%
2. Final exam: 30%
3. Quizzes: 25% Pop-up quizzes are given to test your comprehension of the assigned readings.
4. In-class presentation on the assigned reading and a reflection paper: 10%
   a. Sign up for a particular topic.
   b. In-class presentation: Summarize the assigned reading. Highlight its theoretical/conceptual issues and relate them to your own experience or current events. Max 7 minutes. No slides necessary.
   c. Reflection paper:
i. Write a short summary of the assigned reading(s). Make sure to define and explain key theory
and concepts used in the reading.

ii. Relate the assigned reading’s theoretical point to your own experience.

iii. Paper lengths: max 10 pages, double-spaced. Due in the following week.

5. Class participation: 5%

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and participate in discussions and other activities.

On electronic distractions

- I take the class as a collaborative effort between myself and students. Each of you is an important co-creator
  of the course and your unique background and experience will enrich the course. Your full engagement in
class is therefore necessary. Electronic gadgets tend to interfere with focus and engagement in class. Let’s try
to create a space that enables you to focus. Each class period is only for 1 hour and 15 minutes.
- Turn off your electronic gadgets. Put them away. You might need your gadgets for looking at the readings
  and taking notes, but if you know that you will be distracted, download the readings and turn off the
internet connection.
- If I see unrelated use of electronic gadgets, I will reduce your participation points. In order to avoid the
point deduction, you have to let me know in advance that you have some emergency that you need to be
connected in class (e.g. your child is sick and you are waiting to hear from a doctor).

Other rules

• Please note that each student is entitled to 4 absences throughout the semester. Each absence beyond this
will result in lowering your overall grade significantly. Students may not come into classroom 15 minutes
after the class starts.
• Each student should check his or her email frequently for messages about the class. I will assume you check
your email at least once a day. It is strongly recommended that you use your UH email address—I do not
take responsibility for email messages that fail to arrive if you are using a non-UH email address
• If you have a physical/mental disability and you have disability access concerns, please contact the KOKUA
Program.
• Please refer to the UHM website on academic dishonesty and related issues.
  http://www.manoa.hawaii.edu/students/conduct/impermissible_behavior.html.

Readings:

• Required text: Barndt, Deborah. Tangled Routes: Women, Work, and Globalization on the Tomato Trail (Rowman
  & Littlefield).
• Other readings are posted on Laulima, under “Resources.”

Course schedule and required readings

Jan 9 course introduction
No required reading
**Thin Bodies**


**Discourse of obesity epidemic**


**Healthism**

**Fit Bodies**


**Tomato**

Feb 8: chapter 6 “picking and packing for the north: agricultural workers at Empaque Santa Rosa”

**Fast Food**


**Bananas**


**Meat**


**March 6 Study session**

**March 8 Midterm exam**

**Genetic engineering**


Film: *Mālama Hāloa: Protecting the Future of Taro and Future of Food*

**Not having food- food insecurity**


**Organic food**


April 12: Bell, M. B. (2004). *Farming for Us All* chapter 8 “New farms, new selves”.

**Coffee and fair trade**


April 19: Lyons, Sarah (2010). “We want to be equal to them: fair trade coffee certification and gender equity within organizations” Human Organization 67 (3)

Film: Birdsong & coffee

**Local and slow food**


May 1: Study session for the final exam