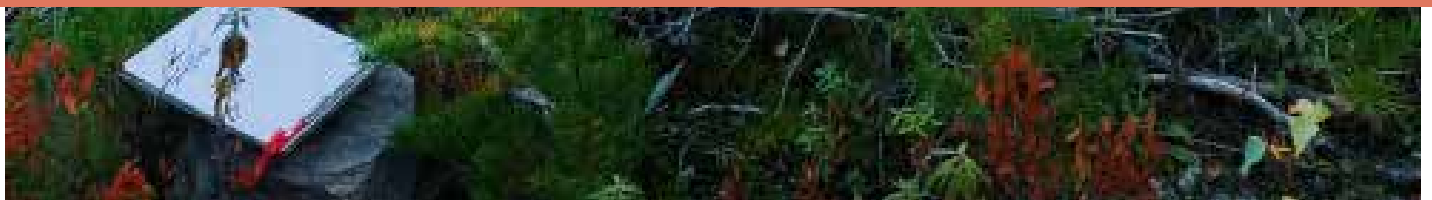




Food Studies Newsletter

Middlebury College

Fall 2024



Welcome from your Food Studies Newsletter Editors!

Mary Nagy-Benson '24.5



My name is Mary Nagy-Benson and I am a super senior Feb at Middlebury College from Weybridge, Vermont. I am an Independent Scholar in Regenerative and Just Food Systems, minoring in Education Studies. I have been passionate about the importance of regenerative farming as a solution to the climate crisis and to our food system since high school. It has been an honor to learn about our food system directly in Addison County through my time living and studying here. I have had the chance to create a documentary about the future of Vermont farming through a high school project. I have also worked on different farms in Vermont, namely Wild Roots Farm in New Haven, Elmer Farm in East Middlebury, Understory Farm in Bridport, and the Farm at the Vermont Youth Conservation Corps in Richmond. Additionally, in my second semester at Middlebury College, I joined a team through the New Perennials Project to research, design, plan, and present an agroforestry system for a parcel of Middlebury College-owned land west of the Knoll. During the spring of my junior year, I went abroad to Copenhagen, Denmark, where I studied a part of the international food system and urban agriculture. Now as a super senior Feb, I am working on my thesis which will look into curriculum development for secondary food studies electives and I am happy to work with Leah Mowry as a Food Studies Assistant to bring you a few more issues before we graduate!

Leah Mowry '24.5



My name is Leah Mowry and I am a super senior Feb at Middlebury College from Peru, Vermont. I am a Neuroscience major, minoring in Food Studies. During my time at Middlebury, I have become more and more passionate about regenerative food systems and the importance of finding sustainable alternatives in the face of the climate crisis. Growing up in rural Vermont, I've had the opportunity to be engaged with the places I get my food. Even before high school, I spent time volunteering at local farms and loved buying produce from the farmers markets. My time at Middlebury has been saturated with Food Studies courses, as well as more immersive experiences within the local food system. I've enjoyed time volunteering at The Knoll, helping local farms, and learning about the larger issues affecting food justice in Vermont. In summer 2023, I studied Sustainable Agriculture in Sweden and Denmark, which gave me a much broader perspective on food production and consumption. I am eager to continue learning about food systems issues and alternatives, and share my knowledge with those around me. As I look toward my future, I hope to find work focused around the outdoors, community, and creating solutions to the destructive patterns contributing to climate change.

Food Studies at Middlebury

Food Studies is an interdisciplinary area of study that integrates environmental, social, health, economic and cultural issues stemming from food systems activities (food production, distribution, access, consumption, waste management) in a systems framework.

Minor Requirements:

2 Introductory Courses:

ENVS 0112 Natural Science & the Environment
FOOD 0280 Middlebury's Foodprint: Introduction to Food Systems Issues
FOOD 0281 Food Power & Justice
ANTH 0211 Environmental Anthropology
ANTH 0345 Anthropology of Food
GEOG 0208 Land & Livelihoods

2 Elective courses related to food, from any department

One upper-level seminar or course (i.e., 300 or 400 level) focused on Food Studies:

INTD 0426 Health, Food, and Poverty: Critical Frameworks for Social Change.
FOOD 310 Agroecology
FOOD 312 Food Policy
FOOD 380 Hunger, Food Security & Food Sovereignty
ANTH/IGST 0460 Global Consumptions: Food, Eating, and Power in Comparative Perspective

OR an **Independent Study** on a topic selected by the student and supervised by a Food Studies affiliated faculty member.

Immersive learning experience. This may be an internship; service-learning associated with a course; or an independent study connected with a community-based organization. When declaring the minor, the student should explain the immersive learning experience they intend to do.



Who is Molly Anderson?

Molly Anderson is the Director of the Food Studies Program and is a Professor at Middlebury College where she teaches classes about food systems, food justice and sovereignty, and sustainability. Molly has a B.S. and M.S. in Natural Resource Management as well as a certificate in Latin American Studies from Colorado State University. She has a Ph.D. in Systems Ecology from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Molly has worked with food system reform and planning in New England, has been part of the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems, and has authored key articles and reports on agriculture and the food system.

A Letter from Molly:

Food systems globally and in the US face a plethora of threats. We're familiar with the devastation resulting from floods in Vermont and Hurricanes Milton and Helene in Florida (don't look for cheap oranges this year!); but the threats go far beyond those caused by climate change. Global conflicts (Ukraine, massive buildups of the US military-industrial complex at the expense of social welfare and well-being); famines in Gaza, Yemen and Sudan; food price inflation; political divisions; and US flaunting the international rule of law that seeks to protect peoples from the weaponization of food have impacts here too.

Middlebury faculty approved the Food Studies Minor in late spring 2019, and we've had 19 graduated minors, an additional 9 declared minors and 8 Independent Scholars since then. However, the future of the Food Program at Middlebury is uncertain at present.

I will retire after the Spring 2025 semester, yet the College has no plans to replace me. Food Studies faculty have applied for a replacement faculty position in anticipation of my retirement for two years and been turned down. In truth, we need not just a replacement but an additional professor who can address the wide scope of Food Studies.

Doubtless the College's response to our proposals for a replacement for me is due to other priorities; but Food Studies faculty believe that Food Studies belongs in a well-rounded liberal arts education, as much as environmental studies (and we can't address climate change without food systems transformation), languages, arts, history, economics and natural sciences. It's up to students to demand that the College continue providing a coherent program of study that prepares you to deal with ongoing and future food system crises.



Upcoming Food Studies Courses

Winter 2025

FOOD 1005A — Endangered Food

We walk into a grocery store and perceive a large variety of food choices. At the same time, we are told western diets are unhealthy and “homogenous.” What does this “homogeneity” refer to? And, does it apply to those of us who strive to consume “balanced” diets? In this course, we will explore the contrast between modern dietary homogeneity and the history and diversity of ancient foods. In addition to reading social science literature and case studies, we will take a practical approach to exploring course themes by meeting with farmers and naturalists aiming to preserve, and return to, diverse and wild food systems. For their final projects, students will undertake a project centering a native foodway.



Taught by:

Alexa Duchesneau is a fifth year Anthropology PhD candidate at Yale University. She studies the nutritional ecology of human and non-human primates.

ANTH 1023A — Anthropology of Meat: Why Humans Consume Other Animals

Why are some animals taboo to eat? Can it be ethical to eat meat (and how is “ethical” defined)? In this course, we will explore meat eating practices around the world, focusing on issues like sustainability, race, and gender. Key texts include Nadasdy’s 2007 article “The Gift in the Animal,” Boisseron’s *Afro-Dog* (2018), Adams’ *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (1990), and Ko’s *Racism as Zoological Witchcraft* (2019). Through a variety of texts, films, and guest speakers—including food discrimination lawyer Thulasi Raj and Vermont slaughterer Mary Lake—we will explore our own relationships to meat eating, while questioning what it means to be human. This course does not seek to persuade you towards or away from vegetarianism; all experiences are welcome.



Taught by:

Amanda Kaminsky is a PhD Candidate in Sociocultural Anthropology at the University of Michigan and an alumna of Middlebury College (Class of 2013, B.A. Chinese).

Reflections from Copenhagen + Italy

by Celia Hoffman
Previous Food Studies Assistant

When one thinks of Copenhagen, food is not usually one of the first things that comes to mind. However, Denmark is a particularly interesting place to study food systems because it has one of the highest market shares of organic food in the world and around 65% of Denmark is used for agriculture. Denmark also has numerous sustainability initiatives, many of which address food system issues. In the fall, I studied at DIS Copenhagen where I took the class “Sustainable Food: Production and Consumption”. In the class, we focused on different food systems issues in Denmark and Europe and focused on sustainability efforts. At DIS, field trips are a large part of the program. For “Sustainable Food” we met with Danish government officials, talked to local producers and food entrepreneurs, and visited farms around Denmark. A highlight of the semester was our two study weeks where we traveled as a class to talk to producers. For the first week, we stayed in Denmark but went a few hours from Copenhagen where we met with organic farmers, visited an ecovillage, toured a pig farm, and talked to fishermen. The week gave us all great insight into the Danish food system and food culture in Denmark. Then, later in the semester, we traveled to Sicily to meet with producers and compare Italian food production to Denmark. In Sicily we visited an avocado farm, talked to a wine producer, found food markets, visited prominent restaurants, and discussed food culture practices. For me, it was particularly interesting to learn about Italian food culture and production before starting my semester in Florence.

When I tell people I studied in Italy one of the first things they always ask is “how was the food”. While eating great dishes was certainly a part of my study abroad experience in Florence, I also learned about the Italian food system through my class at the University of Florence where I took “Politica agraria e alimentare” or “The politics of agriculture and food systems”. In that class, we discussed EU food policy and initiatives around Italy for different food topics. The EU, like the US, has influence over a global food market and is highly political; however, in Italy specifically, local policy greatly impacts food culture and production greatly. It was particularly interesting to learn about EU food politics as the only American in the class. Due to the extensive influence of the US food system, my professor often talked about US international food policy and its impact on global markets in comparison to that of the EU and Italy specifically.

Overall, I loved my time abroad and am so glad to have the opportunity to study food systems in two different countries. While both places are in the EU and therefore operate under similar legislations, food production and culture differ greatly and it was very interesting to experience the difference first hand.



Check out the Food Studies Webpage for more food-specific study abroad ideas!