

AN2205: Food and Foodways
FASStrack 2026

Schedule: PM Session (2pm-5pm, Singapore Time)

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday

Course Description

Food is of wide-ranging interest not only because eating constitutes as the most important human activity for survival and sustenance, but the gathering, preparation and consumption of food are imbued with diverse rules, taboos, rituals and symbolic meanings that affect humans at all levels of society, from individuals and social groups, to corporations, nation states and the global economy.

This course examines what, how, with whom, when, and where we eat (and not eat) in relation to conflicting and contradictory influences on self-identity. Cross-cultural studies will be explored to help students better understand how the various processes of food production, preparation, distribution, management and consumption shape many aspects of everyday life, such as age, ethnicity, gender, family, nationality and religion.

Other important issues to be explored include historical processes that have contributed to the development (and deterioration) of the global food systems of today. These encompass colonialism, the spice trade, international developments, fair trade, world health, food waste, and impact on the environment. We will also examine issues on the above topics that have emerged after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, and other recent events.

Readings for this module will cover ethnographic studies on many cultures across the globe to give students a good comprehensive understanding of the diverse practices, and in a practical, relevant, and easy-to-relate to manner.

Students are not required to have any prior knowledge of the Anthropology or Sociology, though you are expected to be curious, open-minded, and have fairly good analytical skills. This module will help clarify some important, but commonly misunderstood and also taken-for-granted, understandings of food as a form of cultural practice, an economic tool, and an important part of social life.

More importantly, this module also aims at helping students sharpen their skills in critical thinking and analysis, and hence students are expected to know their readings and participate actively in class discussions.

Preclusion/ Prerequisite

Nil

Lecturer

Ho Swee Lin, Associate Professor, sochsl@nus.edu.sg

Course Assessment

Assessments		Assessment deadlines
Response Paper	20%	22:00 hours 5th July (Sunday)
Group Presentation	40%	One Group per day to present in class on 7-10 July (Tue-Fri)
Reflections Paper	40%	22:00 hours 19th July (Sunday)
Total for CA:	100%	

- **Response Paper (20%):**
Each student is to write a paper of approximately 500 words on their own personal thoughts about a documentary to be assigned during the first week, or the field trip, and upload it onto CANVAS by 22:00pm 5th July 2026 (Sunday).
- **Group Presentation (40%):**
Students will join one presentation group to make an in-class presentation of approximately 20-30 minutes during Week 2 (7-10 July 2025). The group project can focus on any topic relating to food. More details will be given when the module commences. You are free to use audio and visual materials. The grade comprises 10% for each individual + 30% for the group.
- **Reflection Paper (40%):**
Students are to each write a paper of approximately 1500 words in the form of personal reflections on any topic covered in this module, or on one of the field trips, and upload it onto CANVAS by 19th July 2026 (Sunday).

Course Topics and Schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Session</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Assignments/Activities</i>
1	1	30 Jun <i>Tue</i>	Food Tourism & The Creative Economy	
	2	1 Jul <i>Wed</i>	Colonialism & Commodity Futures	
	3	2 Jul <i>Thu</i>	Re-Inventing Cultural Heritage & National Identity	
	4	3 Jul <i>Fri</i>	<i>* Field Trip A * (To be confirmed)</i>	<i>Response Paper due 5 July 2026</i>
2	5	7 Jul <i>Tue</i>	Gender & The Family	<i>Group Presentation 1</i>
	6	8 Jul <i>Wed</i>	Ethnicity & Religion	<i>Group Presentation 2</i>
	7	9 Jul <i>Thu</i>	Fast Food, Instant & Ready Meals	<i>Group Presentation 3</i>
	8	10 Jul <i>Fri</i>	Regimes of Healthy Food & GMOs	<i>Group Presentation 4</i>
3	9	14 Jul <i>Tue</i>	The Big Business of Bottled Water	
	10	15 Jul <i>Wed</i>	Food Waste & Food Security	
	11	16 Jul <i>Thu</i>	<i>* Field Trip B * (To be confirmed)</i>	
	12	17 Jul <i>Fri</i>	The Future of Food & Summary	<i>Reflections Paper due 19 July 2026</i>

Reading List

All readings will be uploaded onto CANVAS nearer the commencement of the course.