

Geog 3041 Geographies of Nature

Dr Emma Roe

What's this about?

What is Nature? Where is Nature? Are we witnessing the end of Nature? Animals, plants, trees, landscapes, our bodies, the food we eat - are they natural? This module will discuss these questions in the context of thinking about the practices by which food (of animal and vegetable origin) is produced, marketed and eaten.

When we go shopping how are images and words used to suggest 'naturalness' which in turn can encourage us to buy a product? How can we understand the practices of farmers, scientists and cooks to illustrate how humans work to transform 'stuff' to produce things we consider as being 'of nature'?



What will we do?

We will consider the role of producing, selling and buying food products; science; regulation; and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the circulation of knowledges about the environment and 'nature' through viewing and discussing four films, going on a field-trip to a commercial farm and taking part in small discussion groups.

Employment value

This course supports the development of your critical thinking skills and developing your ability to build an argument.

Also, it will develop your ability to think ethically and politically about how biotechnology is shaping the food we eat and human health advances. Additionally, the course studies how food is produced, packaged and marketed and will be of interest to students interested in supply chains, retailing and marketing. As well those interested in human-animal interactions.

Critical thinking

You will learn a range of theoretical approaches including the 'social construction of meaning', the 'social production of nature' and 'more-than-human geographies'. Plus a set of ideas that argues that humans gain much of their knowledge of the world around them through the practical activity human bodies engage in, and that much of this is with very little thought.

The Student View

'A very refreshing module when surrounded with courses dependent on facts to have discussions and debates to process information and arguments.'

'This course has challenged the way I think about things that I usually take for granted and I have enjoyed (overall) being taken out of my comfort zone.'

'Emma's enthusiasm for the course and her subject is brilliant and really helped me to understand key concepts and enjoy the course.'