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DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING
AALBORG UNIVERSITY

Course Programme **“Mapping Foods and its’ Structures”**

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Aalborg University
Department of Civil Engineering
Center for Food Science, Design and Experience

DCE Lecture Notes No. 41

Course Programme
“Mapping Foods and its’ Structures”

by

Tenna Doktor Olsen Tvedebrink

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COURSE **PROGRAMME**

“Mapping Food and its Structures”

P2 2016



Figure 1: Food Product Design

“Preparing food means constructing food, assembling, composing. The process of constructing food is similar to architecture ... we must understand again that all our deeds and thoughts – and that includes cooking and building – are permeated with the ancient past, and with tradition.”

Quote by Kubelka (2007:14)

(Illustration by Tenna D.O. Tvedebrink 2014)

Dear students

Welcome to your second DESIGN course: '*Mapping Food and its Structures*' and a new series of lectures and workshops on the creative and design oriented aspects of food studies. As in your first semester, I hope you are ready to learn how to implement the design based theoretical knowledge, methodological skills and practical creative tools into more detailed considerations about analyzing food contexts and creating innovative food products.

This course programme will guide you through the course; the literature, the content of the different lectures and the various workshop exercises, as well as the demands for the final assignment and evaluation criteria for the individual exams held in April 2016.

This course programme (together with Moodle) will be your guidance for the next couple of weeks, as well as for the individual study time where you need to prepare the final assignment for the examination. So please read it carefully ☺

I hope you will have an inspiring couple of weeks and that you will enjoy the course.

I look forward to meet- and work with you all!

All the best

Tenna

Course responsible

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INTRODUCTION

As you know, the education '*Integrated Food Studies*' is based on the knowledge, skills and competencies captured with the three major research disciplines: *Public Health Nutrition (MENU)*, *Food Networks & Innovation (FINE)*, and *Food+Design (DESIGN)*. In short, MENU can be defined as the area of healthy meals, food service and the public health nutrition aspects of food. FINE is the more socio-technical understanding of food-environments and the policy-processes related context of the food systems. Whereas, DESIGN (which this course represents) is related to the *aesthetic* understanding of- and *creative* work with food experiences and food contexts. Throughout the education these three major disciplines/research perspectives and their approaches supplement, support and counterweight each other, thereby aiming at an *integrated* understanding to the very complex concepts of food studies in general. - Of course with the aim to bring you a much broader, more profound and holistic understanding of how to understand- and work with food in the future.

As mentioned in your first semester (see Tvedebrink 2015), when we engage in food studies terms like '*meal*', '*eating*' and '*food*' contain an enormous richness well beyond what we eat and the nutritional value of a given food product. On one hand, a '*meal*', '*eating*' and '*food*' are self-evident and common words in the everyday life vocabulary of the Western world. On the other hand, they are concepts in which different researchers try to pinpoint some features of our eating habits and our essence as social actors and members of a certain culture (Tvedebrink 2015). A '*meal*', '*eating*' and '*food*' are thus complex phenomena often involving interactions between many different *persons, ideas, spaces* and *objects* (natural as well as artificial). The *experience* of a '*meal*', of '*eating*' or of '*food*' are therefore also about much more than the physiological-sensory input (the sense of taste, smell, sight, texture, sound, mouth feeling etc.) of eating a specific food object. The eating experience or what could in some occasions be referred to as '*a food experience*' are *also* about the psychological, social, cultural, spiritual and *aesthetic* dimensions unfolded (see e.g. Finkelstein 1989; Gustafsson et al. 2006, Meiselman 2008 from your P1 literature, or Korsmeyer 2002).

In the first DESIGN course, in IFS-P1 during the autumn 2015, you engaged into the design of the entire scenery of a meal – the *room* and *atmosphere* framing the meal and eating experience. But, in this semester we zoom into design considerations on the actual ***food product***.

But, what is a food product really?

And what is the connection with design?

As argued for by Kubelka (2007:14) "*Preparing food means constructing food, assembling, composing. The process of constructing food is similar to architecture ... we must understand again that all our deeds and thoughts – and that includes cooking and building – are permeated with the ancient past, and with tradition*". The key is according to Kubelka (2007) that cooking (the field of food) and architecture (the field of design) are both about poetry and transformation. As also argued for by Breuss (2007:31) "*Methodologically, a recipe can be analysed just as precisely as a picture or a building. ... the objects involved can be identified...an emotional expression ... an idea of the work in the context of its times can be developed, with knowledge of the prevailing circumstances and historical conditions...*". So, if we for a

moment move away from the world of food and look into the world of product design, an interesting perspective occurs.

Historically, product design – or what is also often referred to as ‘Industrial Design’ - emerged during the so-called Industrial Revolution with the development of modern mass-production methods and changes in social structures (Heskett 1980). Here the design of objects/products quickly became very consumer and customer oriented. To “survive” the rapidly growing market most product designs as such had to meet at least two criteria: 1) being easy to manufacture , and 2) being able to spark the desire of consumers (Wasson 2000, Heskett 1980). Back then the form, style and function of an object symbolised strong messages about its users.

Today, the field of design covers a large range of sub-disciplines such as for instance urban design/planning, social design, experience design, service design, strategic design, web design, interaction design, communication design, building design, interior design, fashion design, *food design* and so on. Despite the different characters of the “products” these designers produce, it is all still about design. It is the same sort of work and the same perspectives with strong parallels to the world of Consumer Science and as part hereof often also both sensory testing and ethnography. Because, as emphasised by Wasson (2000:379) “...*design is, at its center, about the communication of a product’s use to its users. And the uses of a product – the way it satisfies needs of potential consumers ...*”.

As mentioned by Wasson (2000:377) designers help develop new products and services of many kinds, but they are often also very concerned with satisfying the needs of the users of these products and services – whether it is a house, a chair, a car, a city space, a webpage, a dress or even a new type of foods. As Wasson (2000:377) says: “*A successfully designed item is one that is easily adopted by consumers. This may be because the product’s use fits with existing behaviour patterns or because it signals a new use in a clear and compelling way.*” Hence, **identifying** and **meeting** the experience, satisfaction and opinions on a given product is often crucial for the success of the product design and the role of the designer. This leads Wasson (2000) to suggest that besides traditional Marketing Research (such as customer surveys, consumer demographics, and records of purchase patterns) ethnographic methods provide a useful tool to investigate and understand details about how products fits into consumers’ everyday lives and practices (Wasson 2000). Hence, the literature provided to you by Wasson (2000) discusses how to apply anthropology and ethnography to the domain of design, thereby providing the shaping of what today is known among design researchers and design professionals as “design ethnography”.

On a very overall and basic level design ethnography can be understood as a methodology introducing a series of data-gathering methods using various creative tools to get user insights. For the last twenty years or so this methodology has been widely use in research practice of design firms such as, among others, the American company IDEO. Relative hereto, the study of consumption has for many years been the focus not only of design, but also anthropologists and ethnographers – as well as sensory scientists. With the fields of anthropology and ethnography looking at the socio-cultural context; how social and political structures influence and change culture, fashion and ‘taste’ (Wasson 2000), and the field of sensory science looking more at the physiology and psychology of ‘taste’; our sensory input and bodily perceptions of food products (Lawless and Heymann 1998).

The challenge for both the fields of anthropology and ethnography as well as sensory science, has been to translate the empirical findings into the development of new, innovative and concrete products.



Figure 2: Food Design Thinking

“Good design can come from many sources of inspiration and many kinds of work processes”

(Wasson 2002)

(Illustration by Tenna D.O. Tvedebrink 2014)

As also emphasised by Wasson (2000:377), *"...this is never a straightforward process. Consumers have complex, multiple needs, which they are not always able to articulate. Also, designers may create new product ideas that satisfy needs consumers did not know they had."* For instance, focus groups (used widely in both anthropology and sensory testing) are despite their open-ended character relying on participants' self-reports on attitudes and practices. Methodologically this means that the data collected is often unreliable and incomplete (Wasson 2000). Furthermore, as also described by Wasson (2000:378), ethnographic discoveries revealed that often consumers say they do one thing but actually do another, and thereby highlighted the importance of learning about product use in real situations.

The field of design is often accused of being *"a world based on innate creativity and intuition"* (Wasson 2002). However, as also emphasised by Wasson (2002), being a designer demands training in technical skills as well as the ability to get inspiration from external sources like consumer behaviour. *"Good design can come from many sources of inspiration and many kinds of work processes"* (Wasson 2002:72). The challenge of the designer is therefore to collect data on relevant instances of consumer behaviour trying to detect patterns and develop explanatory models which can be generalized, and on this basis identify new product directions (Wasson 2000). - Which brings us to the theoretical value of design thinking and methodological importance of creative tools such as Customer Journey Maps (CJM). Developing a CJM is an analytical process performed in between the data collection and the design phases of a project. Here the idea is to reveal some of the "hidden" dimensions of the user – reveal *"not just what the consumers say they do, but what they actually do"* (Wasson 2000:378). Wasson (2000) mention participant observation with video and note taking, as well as mounted videotaping, shadowing, questionnaires, interviews, and photo narratives as obvious methods to collect empirical data on consumer behaviour. The analytical framework used to code the data is based on the following elements: 1) activities, 2) environments, 3) interactions, 4) objects, and 5) users.

The CJM approach can also be seen as a kind of 'Participatory Design Approach', which allows the researcher to gather users and give them tools to help construct models of objects that meet their "tacit needs" (Wasson 2000). The CJM is as such an approach which provides a creative environment. Furthermore, the point is that because design is a profession which is very visually oriented, the CJM is not just a visually based tool to help you analyse and evaluate empirical data, but also a creative tool which helps you to begin to develop new ideas and create new design concepts - for instance for future food products.

One important point to keep in mind is, as mentioned by Wasson (2000), that the term 'ethnography' has a slightly different meaning in the field of design than in the field of anthropology. Often within the design field, the research phase is conducted more quickly, given less theoretical contextualization and analysed in relation to the purpose and needs of the designers (Wasson 2000:383,384). This means that in the design world, ethnography is associated more with the methods of collecting the data, than analysing the data! A strong criticism put forth by Wasson (2000:386) is that *"The anthropological apparatus that stands behind ethnography – the self-reflexivity of participant observation, the training in theory that enables fieldworkers to identify patterns – these are poorly understood in the design field"*. Another point to keep in mind is that when designers talk and write about design ethnographic methods and creative tools there is not one established way/method. Each design form and designer has different variations of the same approaches, combine methods and in that way continuously develop research methods dependent on the specific research problem at hand. Hence, you can find thousands of ways of doing a customer journey map depending on which firm or research group you

engage in. It is like a receipt for cooking - each chef often makes personal adjustments to fit their needs and desires. Still, an important statement put forth by Wasson (2000) is that the field of design can benefit from anthropology, as well as the work activities of researchers and designers needs to be integrated to achieve greater product innovations (Wasson 2002). Hence, we need to focus more on joining together diverse groups of people; join anthropological knowledge with design knowledge to achieve **research based design solutions** with much greater impact – just as is the goal in the IFS-education where we try to blend design with other food studies.

Unfortunately, very little is published on how to apply the analytical and creative methods from the design world to the food world. But in this course we will, as last semester, explore the merging of design and food, by looking at the “Bow Tie model” developed by Wasson (2002) and the Customer Journey Map. So, based on the above, when we then focus on **food product innovation** it is important that you do not just see food products as an object of industrial design – a product designed with the aim of aesthetic beauty or a certain taste – but that you also begin to think of it as a product of *service design*, or perhaps even *experience design* reaching beyond the object itself into its’ surroundings and users.

COURSE CONTENT:

The specific course: *Mappings Foods and its Structures* aims on the background of an integration of knowledge from disciplines such as: consumer science, gastronomy, food design and architectural thinking, at providing the student with a broad design frame-of-reference for the theoretical, methodological and practical work with analysing and creating *innovative food products*. This course as such, in continuation of the Design course provided in the first IFS-semester, focuses on the integrated understanding of what could be called “food-design thinking”.

In continuation hereof, the purpose of this course is to unfold and explore the so-called “design-strategic” dimensions related to the structures of certain food products. - Thereby giving the student theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and creative competences on how to unfold the aesthetic dimensions of foods in both public and private domains. This is done with a basic introduction to central theory, analytical models and creative design tools for describing, evaluating and predicting the design of food products. But also a series of individual and group-based exercises introducing the student to produce, cook and prepare foods that can be applied in public food events, and encourage them to reflect upon how interdisciplinary collaborations and product design related food – i.e. packing, labelling, brands, retail and utensils influence the food-design.

As mentioned, one of the key theoretical models presented this semester is the “Bow Tie Model” (BT-model) developed by Wasson (2002). This model is developed in the attempt to describe how to integrate anthropological knowledge and ethnographic research methods with design knowledge and creative skills to achieve a research based background for developing new, innovative products. As such the BT-model can be seen as an overall outline for how to work in practice with food product development – how to collect data, perform data analysis and create concepts for new products.

A key point in the use of the BT-model is that the collected ethnographic data do not speak on its own (Wasson 2002:79). As stated by Wasson (2002:79) “*Simply watching a videotape of consumer behaviour does not transparently reveal design recommendations that are both far-reaching and*

accurately targeted to user needs...". According to Wasson (2002:79) an analytical process is needed to reveal the underlying belief patterns and practices; the meanings of certain activities. The ability to contextualise these patterns... use the analysis to develop a framework for the product development (Wasson 2002). The research phase pushes you as a designer to base your creative ideas on collected data and user-driven insights. The design phase is very much based on given shape to the product/idea – through visualisations and prototypes. The BT-model developed by Wasson (2002) illustrates how the research phase is integrated with the design phase. - The knot representing the complicated analytical phase where the two fields blend together to create the framework of the specific task at hand. Please bear in mind, that it is not a process of “handing over” data from research to design. There is never a complete separation between research and design, even though this could be implied with the BT-model (Wasson 2002). It is an abductive – iterative approach with a series of continued loops back and forth.

COURSE FRAMEWORK:

To help the students get started with the work of analyzing and creating innovative food products, we have established an overall framework to analyze, but also to practice and get familiar with the course literature/theory and how to use the analytical models and creative tools/methodology presented in the course. This framework takes its point of departure in the context of ***Nordic Pasta Design***.

Pasta is a very simple food product. In its most basic preparation it consists only of eggs and flour. It is a shapeable material and it is very easy to create a large amount of prototypes very fast. At the same time it has a great potential for being designed into wonderful new shapes and developed into creative tastes by adding different types of herbs, vegetables, fruits, meats, colors and so on. So despite, its South-European (and Asian) origin, as well as its humble appearance, pasta is a highly interesting food product to examine from a design point of view. According to Kubelka (2007:21) *“All Italian pasta tastes more or less the same, as it is always made of the same grano duro. And yet each type has a different consistency, is a different size, a different shape and this conveys an unmistakable message”*. The point is that the variety of different pasta types can be said to respond to a number of important ‘design criteria’ characterizing the complexities in most food products, like stakeholder interests, consumer choice and design process of creating innovative food products in general.

An example is the case of the pasta type called *macaroni* – this food product should meet design criteria beyond the obvious nutritious qualities, but also relate to other dimensions such as an even surface thickness, in order for the pasta to be cooked evenly; an ample area, which allows the sauce to be contained; and not least, adaption to mass production and sale in retail. Furthermore, pasta should be communicated to potential customers and consumers. It should be packed, labelled and branded. Before it is finally cooked and served, and even here in this final process of the food product a series of traditions and rituals on how to prepare and eat pasta (and many other food products) govern our eating habits. How we eat, what we eat and which utensils we use. As mentioned in your first semester, the terms ‘meal’ and ‘eating’ contain an enormous richness well beyond what we eat and the nutritional value of a given food product. As such, pasta serves as a focus area throughout the course making a distinct connection between food and foodscape enterprises.

Secondly, the theme of *Nordic Pasta Design* is an interesting food product to examine, because in recent years there has been a great attention towards not only the commercial and culinary brand of

the 'Nordic', but also the *nutritional* and *health* related values of the Nordic and how that can possibly help change our bad eating habits. As often referred to in the Public Health Nutrition lectures, modern lifestyle among especially children and young people in the Western World are increasingly contributing to unhealthy eating patterns that possibly threaten future public health and our welfare systems. As a result there is a growing interest among Danish researchers (and some politicians) in behavioral 'change strategies' that can foster healthier lifestyles and lead to better food choices. In particular such 'change strategies' are turning to public welfare settings like the schools, kindergartens and other educational institutions where at least one meal is consumed in the everyday by children and young people. An example is the recent research done with the project *OPUS*, where the Nordic context was used to put a greater focus on locally-produced ingredients such as Rye and series of Scandinavian herbs like Ramson on the everyday food agenda. From this point the course will make parallels to present Danish food brands and the tendencies for future foods and its structures.

COURSE ORGANISATION:

The course is, as last semester, organized as a series of lectures and two larger workshops, including group work and individual work with student interaction expected through various exercises, and a final portfolio assignment which needs to be handed-in for the oral exam. The overall idea is, from a learning perspective, to provide the students with a theoretical, methodological and *practical* understanding of how to "move" from observation and analysis of a given food situation or problem, into *developing* and *creating* innovative solutions on a conceptual and food product related level. Such a creative process cannot necessarily be taught on strict theoretical background – using traditional class lectures and research based literature, but the designerly knowledge, skills and competencies needs to be achieved in practice – through workshops introducing a problem-based learning environment and giving the students the opportunity to work "hands-on" with different creative tools.

The workshops are structures as a series of 2 hour (2x45 min) lectures followed up by group work/individual exercises combined with pin-up sessions, plenum feedback and continuously supervision from lectures and co-lectures. Out of 15 course sessions in total, 4 lectures are provided in the beginning of the semester and 4 during the two workshops. Furthermore in the two workshops 6 supervision sessions are held for group work and individual assignments with ongoing feedback and supervision. Finally, the course module is rounded off with a portfolio session providing the students with the opportunity to get individual feedback on the final assignment/portfolio and their preparations for the exam. This means that 1/3 of the course sessions are held in addition to the two workshops.

TEACHING ACTIVITY:

See detailed descriptions in 'Semester Description' and 'Moodle'.

SCOPE AND EXPECTATIONS:

See detailed descriptions in 'Semester Description' and 'Moodle'.

EXAM & EVALUATION:

According to the: “Curriculum for Master’s Program in Integrated Food Studies”, published by the Faculty of Engineering and Science, the Study board for Planning, the course: “Mapping Foods and its Structures” is an internal exam, individually evaluated. This means each student will have to do an oral presentation, held in English. In addition hereto, you will use a portfolio (max 6-7 A3 pages) as a guideline for the oral presentation. The evaluation of the oral presentation is in total based on a combination of the students understanding of: 1) the theories, methods and creative tools presented in the course, 2) a reflection on the exercises developed during the two workshops presented with the final assignment in the portfolio, and 3) a reflection on further developments and consideration on the results of the portfolio.

The examination of each student is limited to 20 minutes (including time for evaluation and feedback). This means you have a short time to present the entire portfolio. So be prepared. At the exam we expect that all demands for the portfolio have been fulfilled. The student’s performance will be evaluated with a grade given according to the 7-step scale.

Further evaluation criteria are stated in the ‘Framework Provisions’, published by the Faculty of Engineering and Science and The Faculty of Medicine, Aalborg University. Also details about the specific location of the examination will be provided later via Moodle.

THE PORTFOLIO

Each student makes an individual portfolio written in English of maximum 6-7 A3-pages.

The portfolio should illustrate an understanding of how to analyze, evaluate and create a Nordic Pasta Design. For instance through the theory, methods and creative tools introduced during the course; customer journey map and prototyping. In addition hereto we strongly encourage students to use visual communication tools such as: moodboard, photos, drawings/sketches, diagrams, collage, key-words and short statements, to avoid too long and descriptive texts. During the entire course, each student either individually or in groups, has researched, registered, analyzed, and designed aspects of a food product. With the portfolio it is time to finish this work. The portfolio as such takes its point of departure in the exercises assigned to you during the workshops. Based on these exercises the portfolio must present your ideas and overall concept for a Nordic Pasta Design (see assignment specifications below).

ASSIGNMENT SPECIFICATIONS

The portfolio should at least present the following:

- **CONCEPT** (pasta name, pasta design, company profile and target group) - **1 page**
- **CONTEXT** (place, event and customer journey) - **2 pages**
- **PROTOTYPES** (design process) – **1-2 pages**
- **STRUCTURE** (360 perspective – form, technique, function, taste) - **1 page**
- **REFLECTIONS** (knowledge, skills and competencies) - **1 page**

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