



In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Master of Science**  
**Julia Silver**

Will present her scientific paper

**Does transmissive sustainability education encourage behavior change? A case study of a university course on food systems**

Wednesday, April 7, 2021

9:00 AM (MST)

<https://asu.zoom.us/j/9802430722>

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee:

Dr. Daniel Fischer, Co-Chair

Dr. Daniel Schugurensky, Co-Chair

Dr. David Manuel-Navarrete, Member

**Abstract**

Industrial forms of food production and consumption are tied to environmental and socio-economic crises like climate change and social injustice. Changes in consumer behavior provide a lever to initiate transformations toward a more sustainable food system. One vehicle that is widely recognized as having the ability to encourage behavior change at large is education. Sustainability education has become increasingly popular over the past two decades, often being studied in innovative teaching-learning formats which employ transformative pedagogies that aim to foster critical consciousness through deep listening, dialogue, action, and reflection of students. However, classical teaching formats which employ more transmissive pedagogies, focused on delivery and mastery of content, have been

comparatively little researched in the field of sustainability with regard to how they impact student behavior. Thus, this research aims to study if transmissive sustainability education can encourage university students to consume food more sustainably. To accomplish this, a case study with 12 undergraduate students in a food sustainability course was conducted. Mixed-methods data collection and analysis techniques, such as questionnaires and interviews, were utilized in order to track participants' self-reported food consumption behaviors before, during, and after the course. Results suggest agreeance among participants about the importance of course contents, however show no significant changes in their food consumption behaviors. This study provides empirical evidence which challenges the idea that imparting sustainability knowledge alone is sufficient to trigger behavior change.