



The History and Evolution of Human Nutrition

Global and Local Perspectives

Course number: 0411.4012

Course location: Katzir Hall, Green Biotechnology Building

July 16-20, 2017, 14:00-18:30

Educational Tour: Professional one day tour to the Sataf reservation in the Jerusalem mountain - a hike into the ancient agriculture and food system of the Levant.

Teacher: Dr. Uri Mayer-Chissick

Exam date: July 21, 2017

3 credit points

Background

Our food system is an issue that has its fair share in every aspect of our societies - climate change, local and global politics, trade and commerce, and environmental issues.

In order to understand the context in which our diets were formulated, we need to obtain a broad perspective and acquire an interdisciplinary approach.

Our plate was designed by four main revolutions in human evolution, prehistory and history:

- **Meat:** The transition from gatherers to hunters-gatherers, when our ancestral hominoids started to eat meat.
- **Bread:** The agricultural revolution, when humans began storing food.
- **Milk:** The secondary product revolution, when humans started to use dairy products
- **Sugar:** The discovery of the Americas by the Europeans and the industrial revolution, that both led to new economy and vast consumption of refined sugar and processed food.

Studying these stages from different perspective – evolutionary, historical, political, economic and physiological – is the main goal of this course.

Aims

1. To establish a basic knowledge of the history and evolution of nutrition.
2. To understand how products that seem to have been on our plates forever came to be a vital part of our diet.
3. To enable a wide perspective and multidisciplinary prism on the main processes that structured our modern diet from prehistory until the modern era.
4. To encourage critical thinking of the issues discussed.



Main Subjects

The main subjects include: basic terms in the history and evolution of nutrition from historical, political, economic and physiological aspects.

1. Introduction: a wide perspective on the evolution of human nutrition
2. The move from gatherers to hunters-gatherers
3. The great protein fiasco
4. Modern livestock
5. Gathering of wild edible plants
6. The agricultural revolution
7. Wheat and bread
8. The art of fermentation
9. The secondary product revolution
10. The land of milk and calcium
11. Coming to America - slaves and sugar
12. The modern sugar economy and health
13. The modern food industry
14. Community based agriculture