

EEES Department Seminar

The Taste of Water Sensory Perception and the Making of an Industrialized Beverage

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This week's seminar is a special "Book Club" experience facilitated by the producers of *The Outfall* podcast, Robert Osborne, Amy Anderson, and David Ladner. It is co-sponsored by the Clemson Environmental Institute. The selected book is *The Taste of Water, Sensory Perception and the Making of an Industrialized Beverage*, by Dr. Christy Spackman. The audience is encouraged to participate in the discussion, which will be recorded and turned into a future episode of *The Outfall*.

About the book: Have you ever wondered why your tap water tastes the way it does? *The Taste of Water* explores the increasing erasure of tastes from drinking water over the twentieth century. It asks how dramatic changes in municipal water treatment have altered consumers' awareness of the environment their water comes from. Through examining the development of sensory expertise in the United States and France, this unique history uncovers the foundational role of palatability in shaping Western water treatment processes. By focusing on the relationship between taste and the environment, Christy Spackman shows how efforts to erase unwanted tastes and smells have transformed water into a highly industrialized food product divorced from its origins. *The Taste of Water* invites readers to question their own assumptions about what water does and should naturally taste like while exposing them to the invisible—but substantial—sensory labor involved in creating tap water.

Bio: Christy Spackman holds a joint appointment in the School for the Future of Innovation in Society and the Arts, Media and Engineering Department at Arizona State University. From 2015 to 2018 she was the Hixon-Riggs Early Career Fellow in Science, Technology, and Society at Harvey Mudd College. She has a doctorate in Food Studies from New York University. Her academic work focuses on how the sensory experiences of food are influenced by "technologies of taste," her term for the oft-overlooked practices used to manage the sensory aspects of foods during production. Finding taste is difficult; it does not leave obvious traceable trails in archives. To get at taste, she trawls through government documents, letters between producers and regulators, scientific papers, advertising ephemera, and oral histories. Additional training in molecular biology, food chemistry, and the culinary arts has allowed her to bridge disciplinary divides in both teaching and research as she examines the relationships between food science and technology, government regulations, public understandings of science, and taste.



2:30 PM

**Friday, September 13, 2024
Rich Lab Auditorium**

Also available online via Zoom:

<https://clemson.zoom.us/j/5783910968>