

NORDISCO 2023 – PLENARY TALKS

All plenary talks will take place in the lecture hall A1 in the main building of Tampere University (Kalevantie 4).

Sally Wiggins – The management of children's eating during preschool lunches

Wednesday November 15th at 13:15–14:15

That we should like what we eat and eat what we like could be something of a modern mantra, a luxury for those of us with sufficient resources to be able to choose our food. When it comes to young children's eating practices, however, it is not quite so simple. Caregivers often focus on trying to overcome children's resistance to unfamiliar foods and to encourage them to 'learn to like' previously rejected foods. What we eat and what we like therefore become closely intertwined through discursive practices, through the ways in which we talk and interact with children during mealtimes. This presentation will demonstrate how this occurs in Swedish preschool lunches, using video-recorded data analysed using Discursive Psychology. Examples include an examination of those moments when children taste unfamiliar foods and when they are offered food by their caregivers during lunch.

Sari Pietikäinen – Decoding Discourse: An assemblage effect

Thursday November 16th at 10:45–11:45

In this talk, I discuss the potential impact of assemblage thinking (Deleuze and Guattari 1984/1987) on discourse studies, especially when analysing complex ongoing political, social, economic and ecological processes. One such process is accelerating climate change, which is rapidly progressing in the Arctic region where I have undertaken a critical discourse and ethnographic study called Cold Rush, focusing on revaluation of natural resources. Using Cold Rush as a soundboard, I explore how assemblage helps in expanding our focus from essences and layers to connections, and moving beyond binaries towards productive interactions between material, discursive, and affective. I suggest that assemblage provides an insightful alternative to fully engage with the power of discourse in addressing current critical questions.

Andreas Ventsel - "Understanding Wicked Problems: A Political Semiotic Perspective"

Thursday November 16th at 16:45–17:45

This presentation delves into the realm of political semiotics, that Peeter Selg (professor of political theory in Tallinn University) and I introduced in our recent monograph "Introducing Relational Political Analysis: Political Semiotics as a Theory and Method" (Palgrave Macmillan, 2021). Drawing inspiration from Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, Jakobson's communication model, and various concepts from (cultural)semiotics and political analysis, I elucidate the significance of political semiotics in addressing the intricate challenges of governance termed as "wicked problems." These problems stand apart from mere simple or complex issues, as well as those that have been de-problematized. Notably, efforts to tackle a wicked problem inherently transform its nature and give rise to new challenges. Hence, the tactics of problematization and de-problematization in problem-solving often become focal points for political struggle.

Brian Due – Situated Socio-Material Assemblages

Friday November 17th at 10:45-11:45

This presentation examines video data from a variety of socio-material settings where humans, nonhumans, materials, technology, and nature assemble through ongoing, emerging productions. Based in ethnomethodology, the presentation suggests a “misreading” (Garfinkel’s term) of Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of assemblages to work out a replacement of agency from being a human characteristic to being a distributed accomplishment within situated assemblages. The talk presents excerpts from human-animal, human-food, human-plant, and human-technology interactions and shows how we can understand these in radical terms as emerging and being accomplished through the distribution of agency. The talk suggests that the replacement of the unit of analysis from being the individual to being the assemblage calls for a respecification of ethnomethodology as assemmethodology