

## Food and Culture

**ANTH 3750, Summer 2019**

Montpellier, France

Class Period 1: 8am-10am

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*Office hours, a course web site with assignment details, and local contact information will be provided as we approach the start of the program.*

When it comes to food, it sometimes seems like we live in a world of endless plenty. In North America and Europe, at least, the supermarkets are nearly always full, displaying thousands of items, from fruits and vegetables, to carefully packaged meats, breads, dairy and an endless variety of snacks, meals, and beverages. As a result of globalization and modern transportation, we are no longer bound by seasons, so we can eat whatever we desire, whenever we desire it. Yet in the middle of this cornucopia, we worry. Americans (and Europeans too) are increasingly obese, bringing on a series of health consequences previously uncommon in human history. We are unsure of the sustainability of our food system and wonder if we can continue to produce and distribute food with little or no regard for seasons or regions. We worry about the consequences of sharp inequalities in food access within our own societies and between our societies and others.

This course will bring an anthropological perspective to the study of our contemporary food system. We will begin by asking why people eat what they eat. We will examine how the definition of food, along with the ways in which it is produced and distributed, shapes and is shaped by society and culture. Food, we will see, plays a central role in the organization of kinship, relations between social classes, the practice of politics, and the shape of religious life. We will examine the relationship between changing systems of food production and distribution and the structure of societies. We will raise questions about how our food system participates in globalization, from questions of inequality, to cultural homogenization, potential loss, and creativity. We will use the resources available to us in Montpellier—farmers markets, wine makers, cheese producers, artisanal chocolate makers, Slow Food advocates, and local scholars—to explore what distinguishes French food thinking and practices from those in the United States. By the end of this class, you will be able to analyze global and local food systems, compare core concepts about food and nutrition across cultures and societies, and critically examine the debates, policies, and social structures regarding food in contemporary society.

### Course Requirements

The course is organized in a seminar format with discussions based on the readings. Thus, each reading assignment should be completed before the date it is to be discussed (see below).

You will be graded on:

- Field/Reading journal, 40% of your grade.
- Field research report (oral), 20% of your grade.
- Final exam, 20% of your grade.
- Participation, 20% of your grade.

**Attendance is mandatory.** Except for severe emergencies, more than 1 absence will reduce your grade significantly. As a seminar, this class cannot succeed without the full participation of all students.

### Academic Integrity

Honesty and respect for your work and for the work of others are essential to your success in this course and in university life in general. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. This includes cheating and plagiarism. Proper social science citation methods will be required on essays. For further details on academic integrity, see the UNO Judicial Code: <http://www.uno.edu/student-affairs/documents/Student-Code-of-Conduct-rev-2018.pdf>

## Disabilities

I will do my best to accommodate the needs of students with disabilities. Please feel free to contact me about your needs. **If you have a disability, please contact the Program Coordinator, Robyn White ([RLWhite3@uno.edu](mailto:RLWhite3@uno.edu)) as soon as possible so that we can best accommodate you.**

## The Program

*All readings will be made available online as PDF files. A link to the readings will be distributed to students a few weeks before we start the program. Unless otherwise noted, all readings are required.*

## Food/Culture/Society: Raising Questions

7/2 Gopnik, Adam. 2005. Two Cooks: Taking Food to the Extremes. *The New Yorker*. September 5.

## What is Food?

7/3 Douglas, Mary. "The Abominations of Leviticus"

Mintz, Sidney. "Time, Sugar, and Sweetness."

Beriss, David. 2011. How Americans Think: About Horsemeat, For Example. FoodAnthropology. <http://foodanthro.com/2011/12/06/how-americans-think-about-horsemeat-for-example/>.

## Agriculture, Place, and the Nation, Some French Thoughts

7/4 Rogers, Susan Carol. 2000. Farming Visions: Agriculture in French Culture. *French Politics, Culture & Society*. 18(1):50-70.

Barthel-Bouchier, Diane and Lauretta Clough. 2005. From Mondavi to Depardieu: The Global/Local Politics of Wine. *French Politics, Culture & Society*. 23(2):71-90.

## Paris

7/5, 7/6 Paris market visit, restaurant menu project.

7/7

## The Taste of Place

7/8 Trubek, Amy, Kolleen M. Guy and Sarah Bowen. 2010. Terroir: A French Conversation with a Transnational Future. *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies*. 14(2):139-148.

Paxson, Heather. 2010. Locating Value in Artisan Cheese: Reverse Engineering Terroir for New-World Landscapes. *American Anthropologist*. 112(3):444-457.

## The Taste of Culture

7/9 Heath, Deborah and Anne Meneley. 2010. The Naturecultures of Foie Gras. *Food, Culture & Society*. 13(3): 421-452.

Cheese project.

- 7/10 Leitch, Alison. 2003. Slow Food and the Politics of Pork Fat: Italian Food and European Identity. *Ethnos*. 68(4):437-462.

Cavanaugh, JR. 2007. Making salami, producing Bergamo: the transformation of value. *Ethnos*. 72(2):149-72.

### **Marchés, Supermarkets, Global Markets**

- 7/15 Gagné NO. 2011. Eating local in a U.S. city: reconstructing “community”—a third place—in a global neoliberal economy. *American Ethnologist*. 38(2):281-93.

Grasseni C. 2014. Re-localizing milk and cheese. *Gastronomica* 14(4):34-43.

- 7/16 Marché des Arceaux, visit (morning), Château de Flaugergues (<https://www.flaugergues.com/>, afternoon).

- 7/17 Arles! Restaurant menu project.

- 7/18 Freidberg, Susanne E. 2008. The Triumph of the Egg. *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 50(2):400-423.

Murphy, John. 2018. Foie gras in the freezer: Picard Surgelés and the branding of French culinary identity. *Food and Foodways*. 26(2):146-169.

### **Cooking, Ritual, Memory**

- 7/22 Moffat, Tina & Danielle Gendron. 2019. Cooking up the “gastro-citizen” through school meal programs in France and Japan. *Food, Culture & Society*. 22(1):63-77.

Roosth, Sophia. 2013. Of Foams and Formalisms: Scientific Expertise and Craft Practice in Molecular Gastronomy. *American Anthropologist*. 115(1):4-16.

- 7/23 Tebben, Maryann. 2015. Seeing and Tasting: The Evolution of Dessert in French Gastronomy. *Gastronomica*. 15(2):10-25.

Chocolate project.

### **Restaurant Worlds**

- 7/29 Beriss, David. 2018. Haute, Fast, and Historic: Restaurants and the Rise of Popular Culture. Peter Naccarato & Kathleen LeBesco, eds, *The Handbook of Food and Popular Culture*. London: Bloomsbury, pp. 124-137.

Sutton, David. 2007. Tipping: An Anthropological Meditation. Beriss, David and David Sutton, eds. *The Restaurants Book: Ethnographies of Where We Eat*. London: Berg. pp.191-204.

- 7/30 Buettner, Elizabeth. 2008. “Going for an Indian”: South Asian Restaurants and the Limits of Multiculturalism in Britain. *The Journal of Modern History*. 80(4):865-901.

Montpellier! Restaurant menu project.

- 7/31 Finals