

ANTHS-203 - Food, Culture, and the Self

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HSSA

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Course introduction and goals: Food is at the center of culture making processes. As such, food and its impact on social organization, culinary history, personal, social and cultural identity, health, systems of governance, poverty, scarcity, opportunity, and the experience of taste are our areas of focus in this course. We will treat food as a foci for deeper inquiry into culture, identity, national development, globalization and social change.



Student expectations, grading, and attendance:

- 1) **Academic honesty/integrity** is a crucial component of the scholarly process. All students will practice these tenets as outlined by RHIT in all class related activities. Notably, **plagiarism** will not be tolerated in any form and punished to the severest extent possible. See the RHIT rules and procedures for more information <http://www.rose-hulman.edu/offices-and-services/registrar/rules-procedures.aspx>
- 2) **Attendance** - I do not take attendance, you are all adults and responsible for your education. We are however a small group. So your absence, either in-person or virtually will be noticed and will adversely impact your grade. If you are going to be absent contact me **in advance** via email.
- 3) **Civil, critical discussion** - I strongly advocate for discussion as a tool for fostering engaged thinking and intellectually stimulating exchange. Disagreement is a potential component of such exchanges. Such disagreements are healthy, but must be treated appropriately. No student will be targeted or maligned, either in class or out by any member of our group, for expressing an opinion different from your own. Additionally, constructive criticism is encouraged as a tool for fostering intellectual exchange.

Grading:

1. Food documentaries - pick two documentaries that focus on food, watch them and write reviews (2-3 pages) (20 points).
2. Discussion leader - everyone must lead at least one discussion during the term. You can sign up for a discussion leader slot during the first week and are responsible for leading a group of students in discussion on the selected date. Note, discussion is not you regurgitating the reading's content, it is a conversation that derives from the topics addressed in the readings and assumes everyone has carefully read the assigned readings in advance of class (10 points).
3. Exam #1 - in-class essay exam (30 points).
4. Quizzes - three short quizzes drawn from the readings, films, and class lectures. Quizzes are designed to bolster in-class discussions by ensuring a high overall level of comprehension and engagement with the course material (3 x 10 = 30 points).
5. Fieldwork - four different assignments that require direct engagement with food, careful note taking on what you observe and experience, and analysis. Typed and edited notes from fieldwork assignments are due at the next class session (4 X 10 = 40 points).
6. Personal food essays - part 1) your relationship to food. Part 2) after watching Tampopo, revisit what structures and governs your relationship to food? Convenience? Taste (in any sense of the term)? Money? Religion? Desire? Fear? Something else... (15 points each/ 30 total).
7. Taste lab report (10 points)
8. Exam #2 - oral exam with me during week 10 (30 points).

Total - 200 possible points

Grade Points:

A 200-185

B+ 184-180

B 179-160

C+ 150-159

C 130-149

D+ 120-129

D 100-119

F below 99

Required texts:

1. *Tasting Qualities: The Past and Future of Tea* by Sarah Besky
2. *The Problem with Solutions: Why Silicon Valley Can't Hack the Future of Food* by Julie Guthman
3. Articles as assigned and circulated

Recommended texts:

1. *Countering Dispossession, Reclaiming Land: A Social Movement Ethnography* by David E. Gilbert

Course schedule:

Week zero: Basics (September 5 and 6)

TH. Course, syllabus, and individual introductions

F. First food memories and favorite foods - Why study food?

Readings: 1) Mintz *Food, Sociality, and Sugar* (pages 3-18), 2) Counihan and Van Esterik introduction (pages 1-18), 3) All four post here - <https://culanth.org/fieldsights/series/food>, 4) Instagram Food is a Sad Sparkly Lie

Week one: Food and culture (September 9, 10, 12, and 13)

M. The beginnings of food = the beginnings of humanity?

T. Food and culture

TH. Land and labor

F. Reading discussion #1

Readings: 1) Food for Thought: Was Cooking a Pivotal Step in Human Evolution?, 2) Rozin et. al Broad themes of difference between French and Americans in attitudes to food and other life domains, 3) Gilbert *Introduction - Land Back*

Week two: "Modern" eating (September 16, 17, 19, and 20)

M. Food systems: Where does it all come from?

T. Global food, industrial food

TH. *Our food - visit to campus dining facilities*

F. Reading discussion #2 - quiz #1

Readings: 1) Guthman *Introduction - ch. 3*

Week three: Food, labor, and land (September 23, 24, 26, and 27)

M. *The Global Banquet: Politics of Food* - **personal food essay due**

T. Forgetting how to cook? Seasonality and modern eating

TH. *Fieldwork #1 Campus dining and sociality*

F. Reading discussion #3

Readings: 1) Goody *Industrial Food: Towards the Development of a World Cuisine*, 2) Gilbert *ch. 4-6*

Week four: Food and nation (September 30, October 1, 3, and 4)

M. Creating a national cuisine - ethnicity, identity, and food

T. Fieldwork #2 Sensory walk - no in class meeting - walk alone at a grocery store, food court, farmers market, etc. during a "sensorially intense" part of the day - make note of what you see, smell, hear, feel.

TH. Fast food slow food, good food bad food

F. Reading discussion #4 - quiz #2

Readings: 1) Takeda's *Delicious Food in a Beautiful Country: Nationhood and Nationalism in Discourses on Food in Contemporary Japan*, 2) Appadurai's *How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India*, 3) Grose's *Beijing's Culinary Crusade: Erasing Uyghur Identity through Food*

Week five: Food taboos (October 7 and 8)

M. You can't eat that! Food taboos

T. Non-food eating - Pica



NOTE! I'll be in Japan for a conference so no in-class meeting these days.

Readings: 1) Douglas' *The Abomination of Leviticus*, 2) Prose's *Faith and Bacon*, 3), Guthman *ch. 4*

Fall Break

Week six: Food, ritual, and place (October 14, 15, 17, and 18)

M. Exam #1

T. Food, ritual, and place - *BUFFET: All You Can Eat Las Vegas*

TH. Hunger and obesity

F. Reading discussion #5

Readings: 1) Mead *Why Do We Overeat?*, 2) Mintz *Eating and Being* (pages 187-214), Guthman *ch. 5*

Week seven: Discerning taste (October 21, 22, 24, and 25)

M. *Tampopo* (bonus - watch *Come Back Anytime* outside of class)

T. Finish *Tampopo*

TH. Fieldwork #3 - food and place - no in class meeting, eat somewhere that emphasizes place as an essential component of their food, how is place incorporated/evident in the food?

F. Taste lab - refined palettes or revealing lies?

Readings: 1) Guthman *ch. 6 - Conclusion*, 2) Besky *Introduction - ch. 2*

Week eight: Food and the Body (October 28, 29, 31, and November 1)

M. What are "good" foods? Why do "bad" foods taste good?

T. Class, poverty, and money

TH. *Fieldwork #4 - home cook'en - no in class meeting, eat a home cooked meal and share it with others. How is it different from other meals? What feelings/emotions does the food invoke in you? Why?*

F. Reading discussion #6 - personal food essay part II due - quiz #3

Readings: 1) Besky ch. 3 - 5, 2) How NAFTA got Mexicans hooked on U.S. junk food

Week nine: Food and... (November 4, 5, 7, and 8)

M. ...Power

T. ...Authenticity

TH. ...Politics

F. Reading discussion #7

Readings: 1) Besky ch. 6 - *Conclusion*, 2) Joassart-Marcelli and Bosco's 'BEST FOR FOODIES': *Food, Digital Media and Planetary Gentrification*

Week ten: Food and... (November 11, 12, 14, and 15)

M. ...Chemistry - 1) pick a highly processed food item (and you can't all do a Twinkie!), 2) research some of the more "exotic" ingredients, 3) bring the food item and your research to class to share

T. Exam #2

TH. Exam #2

F. Exam #2

Readings: **BY MONDAY!** 1) Prescott, Naik, and Logan's Not Food: Time to Call Ultra-Processed Products by Their True Name

