**Anthropology of Food (W Course)**

**ANTH 290A**

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Semester: Spring 2011

Location: Asbury Hall 317

Time: 12:40-2:10 Tuesday and Thursday

Office: Asbury Hall 219

**Office Hours:** 10am-noon Tuesday and Thursday, and also by appointment

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***“Food is our common ground, a universal experience.”***

James Beard (1903-1985)

***"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are.”***

Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826)

**Course Description:**

This course will address the topic of food from an anthropological perspective. It will examine the role food plays in shaping identity, gender construction, ethnicity and rituals. The course will also work to engage other disciplinary perspectives such as those from history, literature, economics and environmental studies as it attempts to make larger connections with the ways in which food and eating are holistically approached from an anthropological perspective.

The course will also incorporate a variety of learning experiences from mini-ethnographic projects on DePauw dining culture, a field trip to a local farm and/or farmer’s market, a personal food log, and the preparation and consumption of several meals throughout the semester. Through these class exercises, students will become active participants and engage in ethnographic research in the classroom and local community.

**Course Objectives:**

The objective of this course is to provide a “recipe” of different perspectives in a

cross-cultural investigation of the importance of food to culture. In this course we will explore all aspects of the cultural uses and symbolic meanings we attach to food and eating. Students will be asked to explore: how we use food, what is changing in our food consumption patterns, what is the relationship between food consumption and the environment, what are some of the politics and the ethics involved in food consumption, what is the significance of eating out, of “ethnic” restaurants, of Starbucks or McDonalds, and how do we analyze the smell and taste of food cross-culturally? These and other questions will be approached from a holistic anthropological perspective. Additional course objectives include:

* To become a more effective writer by creating well crafted and thought provoking written assignments that incorporate class material with your own voice.
* To explore the importance of food in identity and how that is expressed through ritual.
* To consider how our eating and purchasing habits relate to health, environment, and power.
* To develop an appreciation for the role of food in society and a knowledge of some of the ways in which food is influenced by and influences our lives.

**Required Readings:**

Pollan, Michael 2006

[*Omnivore's Dilemma*](http://www.amazon.com/Omnivores-Dilemma-ebook/dp/B000SEIDR0/ref=sr_1_23?ie=UTF8&s=digital-text&qid=1268161651&sr=8-23)

Beriss, David 2007

*The Restaurants Book: Ethnographies of Where we Eat*

Gewertz, Deborah and Frederick Errington 2010

[*Cheap Meat: Flap Food Nations in the Pacific Islands*](http://www.amazon.com/Cheap-Meat-Nations-Pacific-Islands/dp/0520260937/ref=sr_1_24?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1268161651&sr=8-24)

Meta Robinson, Jennifer and J.A. Hartenfeld 2007

[*The Farmers' Market Book: Growing Food, Cultivating Community*](http://www.amazon.com/Farmers-Market-Book-Cultivating-Community/dp/0253219167/ref=sr_1_11?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1268161525&sr=8-11)

All required texts have been ordered with the DePauw University bookstore.

Note: There are also articles and/or chapters that are required reading. These articles are noted in your syllabus with an asterisk (\*). Be sure to bring either a copy of the article and/or your notes to class.

**Course Format:**

Methods used to cover class material include lectures, films, guest lecturers, field trips and most importantly class discussion. The lectures will be used to introduce key concepts during each week’s topic, but they will also be less formal and very participatory. Films will also be used as texts to enhance the course material. Periodically we will split-up into smaller discussion groups to review and analyze material more thoroughly. Students will occasionally be asked to reflect on films, classroom discussions, and readings in the form of in-class response papers. In order to achieve this cooperative learning experience, readings must be done as assigned and texts as well as notes brought to class.

**Grading:**

1. **EXAMS**: There will be two essay exams each worth 15% of your final grade. One test will be given mid-way through the course and the other at the end of the semester.
2. **PAPERS:** The papers are designed as mini-ethnographic assignments that ask you to incorporate anthropological research skills in your daily life. These are activities that allow you to try your skills as an anthropologist. The assignments are worth varying amounts of your final grade and more details on each assignment will be provided throughout the semester.
3. **REFLECTION**: this focuses on food and memory and asks students to write a reflection paper on food and memory using an experience from their childhood (5%).
4. **OBSERVATION**: the Restaurant Review asks students to visit an “ethnic” restaurant and write an essay analyzing cultural indicators or ethnicity that they note in the menu, food, décor, server attire, and other aspects of the establishment (10%).
5. **INTERVIEW**: students will investigate local DePauw eating culture and practices by interviewing students, faculty and/or staff (10%).
6. **PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION**: students will work in small groups on a family recipe project where they will investigate, collect and analyze family recipes (10%).
7. **RESEARCH PAPER** (8-10 pages, double-spaced): Choose a food and conduct historical and ethnographic research on it. Explore its historical emergence and transformation over time. Study its relationship to people and communities by understanding the significance people give to it, the meaning it holds for people, the way in which it circulates crossing different cultural spaces, and the social relations involved in producing and consuming this food. Students are expected to get their topics approved by me before March 15th (20%).
8. **PARTICIPATION**: Participation is an integral part of this course and worth 15% of your final grade. There are numerous ways you can participate in class, but to start you must first have a punctual attendance record. Attentive listening is also key to class participation as is contributing insightful comments that link class material to your experiences and/or your classmates contributions as well as engaging class activities (group discussions, debates, reflection/response papers).

Discussion leader: students will work with the professor to lead a class discussion. Students are responsible for writing an outline and discussion questions for the class as well as introduce one new source to the assigned topic.

Your final grade for the course will be based on the following:

* Participation….…………….……………15%
* Papers……………....…..………………..55%
* Two (2) exams.………………………….30%

TOTAL 100%

**Grading Scale**:

A 94%+ A- 90-93%

B+ 87-89% B 84-86% B- 80-83%

C+ 77-79% C 74-76% C- 70-73%

D+ 67-69% D 64-66% D- 60-63%

F 59%-

A note on graded materials—you must wait at least 24 hours (but no more than 1 week) before coming to see me about a grade you received on any class material. I am available for consultation regarding any graded assignment only after you have taken sufficient time to read through both your original work and my comments. Keep in mind that reviewing graded material means a possible increase OR decrease in the original grade, so be sure to look over your work carefully before bringing it to my attention for a second time.

The following information will help you better understand the criteria for graded material:

**A= exceptionally thought-provoking, original, creative in both content and manner of presentation, and a skillful use of concepts and/or materials which are fully supported.**

**B= presents a solid understanding of the subject matter and an ability to handle the issues and materials encountered in the subject with only minor errors.**

**C= demonstrates an adequate understanding of the subject matter with central ideas present, but too general, repetitious and not clearly supported or integrated with evidence and details.**

**D= a minimally acceptable performance with a confusing central idea and lacking details. Parts of the assignment are missing and/or incomplete.**

**F= shows lack of effort and minimal comprehension of material with major mechanical errors, no thesis, and misuse of key concepts.**

**W Credit:**

This course is also a W course. This means that a large majority of the work we will be doing in class will include writing, and these writing assignments will vary in focus to allow the opportunity for students to gain a broader understanding of the craft of writing. These assignments will help you become more aware of successful writing techniques as well as allow you the opportunity to engage in various writing styles with a particular emphasis on ethnographic writing used in anthropology. In this W course, you will learn good writing habits that go along with writing as a process. At the end of this course, you will receive both a final letter grade and a competency mark (“W” or “no W”). In order to become certified as writing competent, you must produce W quality work on at least three of the five paper assignments with a minimum grade of a C or higher.

**Attendance:**

Regular attendance and active class participation is required. Late arrivals will not be tolerated. Class attendance will be taken at the beginning of the period, and it is your responsibility to make sure you receive credit for your attendance if you arrive after attendance is taken. Irregular attendance and repeated late arrivals will result in the lowering of the final course grade.

**Class Preparation:**

Your class preparation is essential to your required active participation in the course. You must complete assigned readings **before** the class period for which they are assigned. You must come to class with prepared questions and comments regarding the assigned readings (see participation in course requirements). This will help ensure your active participation in class.

**Things to think about regarding the readings: What was the author’s main point/thesis? How does this relate to the class topic? What connection can you make between the reading and your own life?**

**Assignment Policy:**

Be sure to pay attention to the submission policy for each assignment as some assignments will be turned in electronically via email (where it is your responsibility to attach the assignment) and others will be turned in as hard copies in class (stapled and numbered). All assignments are due at the beginning of the class session, unless otherwise noted. Late assignments will not be accepted without a medical excuse or otherwise documented emergency. The instructor retains the right to lower the grade on any late assignment accepted. If you must miss class on the day an assignment is due, it is your responsibility to turn the assignment in early.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

All work must be **your own**. You must give credit to **any** information and/or ideas that you use that are not your own by citing it in your work. Failing to do so will be perceived as plagiarism resulting in a zero on the assignment and possible additional penalties to be decided by the instructor. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation procedures, you should consult the Writing Center.

**Questions???**

I encourage all of my students to take advantage of my office hours, either for questions, concerns, or just “drop-in” discussions. Please feel free to stop by Asbury Hall 219, and if the “official” hours are not convenient or you would like to ensure yourself a specific block of time, we can set up an appointment (office phone x4372 or email [acastaneda@depauw.edu](mailto:acastaneda@depauw.edu)).

**Course Schedule and Reading Assignments**

\* = Electronic Article

**WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION**

February 1st

* Discussion of course, syllabus, and anthropology of food

February 3rd

* READ: Berry, “The Pleasures of Eating”\* (In *We Are What We Eat*) AND Mintz, “The Anthropology of Food and Eating”\*
* FILM: *The Meaning of Food: food and culture*

**WEEK 2 FOOD & MEMORY**

February 8th

* READ: Dufresne, “Nothing to Eat but Food: Menu as Memoir” AND McCorkle, “Her Chee-to Heart” (In *We Are What We Eat*).\* AND Renne, “Mass Producing Food Traditions for West Africans Abroad”\*

February 10th

* READ: Salazar, “Salad Days: A Visual Study of Children’s Food Culture” (In *Food and Culture* AND ONLINE).\* <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415977777/resources/default.asp>

AND Counihan, “Fantasy Food: Gender and Food Symbolism in Preschool Children’s Made-Up Stories” (In *The Anthropology of Food and Body*).\*

* FILM: *The Meaning of Food: food and family*

**WEEK 3 INDUSTRIAL FOOD**

February 15th

* **REFLECTION PAPER DUE**
* FILM: *King Corn*

February 17th

* READ: *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Introduction and Part 1

**WEEK 4 FOOD & GENDER**

February 22nd

* READ: Freeman, “Having It His Way: The Construction of Masculinity in Fast-Food TV Advertising” (In *Food for Thought*) AND Counihan, “Food Rules in the US”\*

February 24th

* READ: Allison, “Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus” AND Counihan, “Mexicanas’ Food Voice and Differential Consciousness in the San Luis Valley of Colorado” (In *Food and Culture*).\*
* FILM: *Grown in Detroit*

**WEEK 5 FOOD & FAT: The Anthropology of an Obsession**

March 1st

* READ: Popenoe, “Ideal” AND Gemzoe, “Heavenly” (In *Fat*) AND Julier, “The Political Economy of Obesity: The Fat Pay All” (In *Food and Culture*).\*

March 3rd

* READ: Willson, “Indulgence” AND Harrison, “Spam” (In *Fat*).\* AND Massara, “Que Gordita”\* (In Food and Culture)

**WEEK 6 MIDTERM**

March 8th

* **MIDTERM EXAM**

March 10th

* READ: Thomas, “Passing Time: The Ironies of Food in Prison Culture” AND Vannini, “Snacking as Ritual: Eating Behavior in Public Places” (In *Food for Thought*).\*

**WEEK 7 FOOD & PLACE: We Are WHERE We eat**

March 15th

* READ: *The Restaurants Book*, starter and chapters 1, 2, 5
* **RESEARCH PAPER TOPIC DUE**

March 17th

* READ: *The Restaurants Book*, chapters 10-12

**WEEK 8 SPRING BREAK**

**WEEK 9 FOOD & MOVEMENT: Following the Food Chain**

March 29th

* READ: Heldke, “Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism” (In *Food and Culture*)\* AND Bestor, “How Sushi Went Global”\*

March 31st

* **OBSERVATION RESTAURANT REVIEW DUE**
* FILM:*Take Out*

**WEEK 10 Following Food Continued…**

April 5th

* READ: *Cheap Meat*, Intro-chapter 3

April 7th

* READ: *Cheap Meat*, chapters 4-conclusion

**WEEK 11 SLOW FOOD**

April 12th

* READ: *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Part 2

April 14th

* READ: Leitch, “Slow Food and the Politics of Pork Fat: Italian Food and European Identity” AND Pilcher, “Taco Bell, Maseca, and Slow Food: A Postmodern Apocalypse for Mexico’s Peasant Cuisine?” (In *Food and Culture*).

**WEEK 12 FOOD & POLITICS: (De)Constructing Identity**

April 19th

* **INTERVIEW PAPER DUE**
* FILM: *Latching On: The Politics of Breastfeeding in America*

April 21st

* Van Esterik, “The Politics of Breastfeeding: An Advocacy Update” (In *Food and Culture*) AND Bentley, “Feeding Baby, Teaching Mother: Gerbet and the Evolution of Infant Food and Feeding Practices in the United States” (In *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies*).

**WEEK 13 FOOD & POLITICS: Eat Locally, Think Globally**

April 26th

* READ: Moore, “Raising the Bar: The Complicated Consumption of Chocolate” AND Gilpin, “Mass Agrarianism: Wal-Mart and Organic Foods” (In *Food for Thought*), AND *The Farmers’ Market Book*, Part 1
* FILM: *Beer Wars*

April 28th

* READ: *The Farmers’ Market Book*, Part 2
* **FIELDTRIP: Farmers’ Market SATURDAY MORNING**

**WEEK 14 FOOD AND COMMUNITY**

May 3rd

* READ: *The Farmers’ Market Book*, Part 3 Harvests AND

*The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, Part 3

* FILM: *The Meaning of Food: food and life*

May 5th

* **EXAM**

**WEEK 15**

May 10th

* Individual writing conferences

May 12th

* **PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION GROUP PROJECT PRESENTATION**

**RESEARCH PAPER DUE 4PM TUESDAY MAY 17TH**

NOTE: The instructor retains the right to change the syllabus for this class as necessary.