



CSP620 - FOOD AND FOODWAYS – SYLLABUS

Course Title: Food and Foodways
Course Number: 620 001
Semester: Fall 2023

Instructor

Instructor: Rita Moonsammy, Ph.D.
E-mail: mamoo002@goucher.edu, ritazm@aol.com
Telephone: 609-828-7012
Online Office Hours: Anytime by appointment

Welcome to our Course!

Foodways are all around us, and while we recognize the importance of food, we may not recognize how suffused with meaning food behavior is and how deeply embedded its symbols and practices are in our daily lives. Some of our strongest values and beliefs -- about the cosmos, the world, other people, our culture, and ourselves -- are expressed in the ways we use, think about, and talk about food.

Neither do we often think about how the need for food has shaped not only the history of civilization, but also natural environments, global politics, and contemporary economics. During this course, we will explore the many ways that food systems are used, and misused, to shape our economies, politics, societies, and bodies. The work of psychologists, sociologists, neurologists, folklorists, anthropologists, biologists, physicians, writers, and historians will help us to understand these issues and find ways to help sustain cultures and the environment.

Main Course Topics

1. The physiological and environmental bases for systems of consumption and food preferences
2. The implication of food and foodways in emotion, memory, and belief
3. The power and malleability of foodways to express group and individual identity
4. The multiple ways that food symbolizes community values, roles, and social positions
5. The social problems associated with food and foodways
6. The impact of local, national, and international politics on food systems
7. The role of personal habits, and economic power, and commercial forces in shaping foodways
8. The reciprocal impact of food production and natural environments
9. The many entities and strategies that aim to address the problems involving food and food systems

Key Learning Objectives

At the conclusion of this course, you will be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the many ways that food is implicated in our personal lives and our communities
2. Explain how individuals and communities use food and foodways to construct, perform, maintain, or change identity
3. Identify some of the physical and environmental factors that shape or undermine traditional foodways
4. Explicate the reciprocal impact of food systems and natural environments
5. Describe the impact of the forces of politics, socioeconomics, and conflict on traditional food systems and community sustainability
6. Employ best practices for constructing cultural sustainability projects involving foodways.

Course Format

- 5 asynchronous discussions
- 10 required online class meetings
- 14 blog entries
- 1 videothread presentation
- 4 in-class presentations
- 1 short paper
- 1 final paper
- 38 assigned readings
- 7 audiovisual viewings
- 1 site visit
- Supplementary online links and reading resources

Assignments

BLOG, ONLINE WRITTEN DISCUSSION, AND MEETINGS

Collectively, 35% of final grade

Blog:

The purpose of the Blog assignments is to encourage reflection on the topics and concepts of the course by examining your own experiences, opinions, and values. Such reflection will help you to internalize the concepts to be studied in the course and to develop a phenomenological perspective on your work. You are free to write as much or little as you like about the assigned topic, as well as to address other topics that interest you, or simply make comments on your thoughts and experiences regarding food. You are encouraged to show your integration of the various topics and concepts through your blogging. The blog will not be considered a formal document. You can be creative with it, both in your writing and your inclusion of other AV elements.

You will be graded on the depth of reflection and analysis that your posts show, the completion of all assignments, evidence of the integration of course concepts into your reflection, and your participation in your classmates' blogging.

Online Written Discussions:

The purpose of the written Discussion assignments is to encourage and facilitate interaction among the students, and between the students and instructor. Your posts should address the assignments but may also bring in ideas and applications that may not be addressed directly in the assignment. Your comments on your peers' work should be polite, substantive, and concise. Encouragement is collegial, but real thought is most helpful to your classmates.

You will be graded on the acuity and completeness of your posts in addressing the topic and the appropriateness of your comments.

Online meetings:

The purpose of the online sessions is to encourage face-to-face interaction, increase the awareness of our class as a learning community, and provide access to the knowledge of others. You are expected to attend all scheduled sessions. If you are unable to, you must notify me the day prior to the meeting, except in case of illness.

You will be graded on your level of participation and on the thoughtfulness and quality of your critique and comments.

SITE VISIT, INCLUDING WRITTEN REPORT AND CLASS PRESENTATION

20% of final grade

The purpose of the site visit is to give you practice in the ethnographic skills of interviewing, observation, description/reportage, and AV documentation of foodways topics prior to the work you will do for your final project.

You will be graded on the completeness of the assignment, the quality of your documentation and report writing, the demonstration of effective fieldwork skills, the integration of concepts about foodways learned earlier in the course, and the depth of your analysis. You will be expected to follow the guidelines on ethnography that we will discuss prior to the first site visit, including preparation for the visit (construction of interview plan and background research), conduct of the interview, on-site documentation, and follow-up writing and response.

Choose one

A. Visit a soup kitchen, food pantry, or other entity providing food and/or food education, and interview the director about his/her views on the mission of the organization/effort and how the culture of the clients affects and is affected by the work of the site. Ask about the people who access the site, their situations, the food that's provided, what the clients seem to prefer, how offerings are decided upon, the problems faced in carrying out the organization's mission, his/her views on whether food is a "human right," and his/her opinion on what systemic changes would be needed to address food access adequately in this country. Immediately after the visit, write up fieldnotes in which you record the details of what you've seen and learned, as well as an evaluation of your success in achieving the goals of the interview. Based on these notes, write and post a two page paper describing the visit and critiquing the success of the enterprise in addressing the various

causes of hunger. Write an (at least) one page summary of your findings on the course site, compare your findings and experience with those of your classmates, and make thoughtful comments on your classmates' posts.

B. Visit someone who grows/raises some type(s) of food product for consumption, e.g., an organic fruit and vegetable farmer, a grain farmer, a livestock farmer -- whether of a small operation or a large one. Interview them about their operation: its history, their reason for entering or continuing it, the problems they encounter vis á vis the market (broadly and locally,) regulations, commodities trading, environmental conditions, efforts to protect or restore environmental resources, lifestyle, and the future of agriculture in the US and in the local region. Immediately after the visit, write up fieldnotes in which you record the details of what you've seen and learned, as well as your conclusions and an evaluation of your success in achieving the goals of the interview. Post these notes online and prepare a 10 minute class presentation that will include questions and discussion with classmates.

ADDITIONAL PRESENTATIONS

25% of final grade

Collaborative Audiovisual Discussion

The purpose of the Collaborative Audiovisual Discussion (platform to be designated) is to engage students regarding their opinion about a topic we've explored in the class:

Student A : Based on the week's readings, support, debunk, or alter this statement "(Genetics,) (Biology,) (History,) (Culture,) (Politics,) (Economics,) has/have the most influence on traditional food systems." Cite at least one cultural group or issue from your own research to illustrate your assertion. Reference the readings, as well.

Student B: Agree or disagree with Student A and cite specific readings and research to support your position.

Both: Comment on the posts of the other students.

In-Class Presentation on Problem of Consumption:

In seven minutes, outline a problem of consumption (obesity, bulimia, anorexia, starvation, malnutrition, hunger, waste, food choice, etc.) Two weeks before, choose your topic and notify your classmates. The presentation should be well researched, carefully timed, and concise. Consider statistics on the problem, the causes and effects of the condition, and the possible remedies. Conjecture, based on your readings thus far, how culture can be implicated in these situations and the possible solutions. Be prepared for questions from your classmates.

In-Class Presentation on Regional Food Sourcing:

Create a five-minute audiovisual presentation in which you explain the main sources of fresh foods available in your region. Describe the region, including demographics, characteristics of the natural environment, presence and role of food businesses (whether local bakeries or large corporations,) and whether and how they might impact communities and/or contribute to environmental or socioeconomic issues in the region.

In-Class Presentation of Final Project (graded as part of your project paper.)

In seven minutes, present a description and summary of your final project. You should cover your beginning assumptions and expectations, your resources and methods, the problems you

encountered, a summary of your findings, and your conclusions. Your presentation should employ audiovisual components.

For all presentations, you will be graded on the clarity, completeness, organization, and conciseness of your presentation, the quality of your AV documentation, the integration of concepts learned in the course, the degree of research, and the depth of your analysis.

FINAL PROJECT

20% of final grade

The purpose of the project is to demonstrate your mastery of the concepts and topics studied in the course; your ability to apply them constructively to practical situations; and your skills in research, documentation, and analysis. Your choices are:

A 15-page (not including bibliography), double-spaced paper on one of the following topics:

1. An ethnography-based study of the foodways of a community under stress, and a proposal for addressing their food needs. Include information on the community's background and how it contributed to their foodways practices, beliefs, and issues. (Could be a group that has gone through starvation or deprivation, that depends substantially on one or two foods, that uses food to maintain some aspect of identity under threat, that has relocated to another country, e.g.)
2. A project model that addresses an issue of cultural sustainability in a community and that focuses on remediation through foodways. The issue or problem may not be one regarding food, but that can be addressed and remediated through a project or program USING food/foodways
3. A project model that addresses a social problem involving food in a specific demographic sector, that takes into account cultural and community factors that exacerbate or cause the problem. It should include a thorough description of the community, the problem, and its causes; the structure of the model -- its goals, methods, participants, and resources -- and the rationale for the particular model.
4. An examination of the impact of a food corporation on the natural and cultural environments of a specific region, followed by a proposed project to ameliorate the negative impact and/or expand positive impacts.
5. You may create a project on a topic and structure of your choice. However, it must be presented to me and approved a month before the final project is due.

You will be graded on the clarity, completeness, organization, and conciseness of your project, the quality of your AV documentation, the integration of concepts learned in the course, the degree of research, and the depth of your analysis.

Required Readings

TEXTBOOK/S:

- Anderson, E.N. *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2005. Available online as a pdf.
- Bowens, Natasha. *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming*. BC, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2015.

- Counihan, Carole, and Penny Van Esterik, editors. *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Second Edition. New York: Routledge, 1997, 2008.
- Nabhan, Gary Paul. *Why Some Like It Hot – Food, Genes, and Cultural Diversity*. Washington: Island press/Shearwater Books, 2004.
- Watson, James, and Melissa Caldwell, editors. *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating, A Reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

ARTICLES:

- Anderson, E.N., "Introduction" and "Chapter One," *Everyone Eats: Understanding Food and Culture*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.
- Barndt, Deborah, "Whose 'Choice'? 'Flexible' Women Workers in the Tomato Food Chain." In *Food and Culture, A Reader*, second edition. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, editors. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Bowens, Natasha. Part IV: "Preserving Culture and Community." In *The Color of Food: Stories of Race, Resilience and Farming*. BC, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2015.
- Brownell, Susan, "Food, Hunger, and the State." In *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating, A Reader*. James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell, editors. Malden, MA: 2005.
- Counihan, Carole, and Penny Van Esterik, editors. "Foreword" and "Preface to the Second Edition," in *Food and Culture, A Reader*. 2nd edition. NY: Routledge, 2008.
- Gutierrez, "The Social and Symbolic Uses of Ethnic/Regional Foodways: Cajuns and Crawfish in South Louisiana." In *Ethnic and Regional Foodways in the United States*
- **Hadley, Craig, Ariel Zoghbi, and Daniel W. Sellen. "Acculturation, Economics and Food Insecurity Among Refugees Resettled in the USA: A Case Study of West African Refugees." Ann Arbor, MI: Center for Social Epidemiology and Population Health, 2006.
- **Hynes, Patricia H.. "Introduction." In *A Patch of Eden: America's Inner-City Gardeners*. White River Junction, VT: The Chelsea Green Publishing Company, 1996.
- **Ikerd, John. "Preserving the Family Farm and Sustaining Rural Communities," *Heritage, Spirit, Vision Journal*, Kenaston, Saskatchewan.
- Ikerd, John. "The New Food Culture: Good News for Small Farmers." pdf
- Julier, Alice, "The Political Economy of Obesity: The Fat Pay All," in *Food and Culture, A Reader*, second edition. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, editors. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Mankekar, Purnima. "'India Shopping': Indian Grocery Stores and Transnational Configurations of Belonging." In *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating, A Reader*. James Watson and Melissa Caldwell, editors. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.
- **Miles, Margaret R. "Religion and Food: The Case of Eating Disorders." In *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 63, No. 3, Thematic Issue on "Religion and Food" (Autumn 1995).
- Nabhan, Gary Paul. Chapters Four and Five. In *Why Some Like It Hot. Food, Genes, and Cultural Diversity*. Washington: Island Press/Shearwater Books, 2004.
- **Carolyn Korsmeyer, editor. "Part IV - Body and Soul." In *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*. New York: Berg, 2005.
- Parasecoli, Fabio. "Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men's Fitness Magazines." In *Food and Culture, A Reader*, second edition. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Parasecoli, Fabio. Introduction, Chapters Six and Seven. In *Knowing Where It Comes From: Labeling Traditional Foods to Compete in a Global Market*. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2017.
- Paarlberg, Robert. "The Global Food Fight." In *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating, A Reader*. Watson, James, and Melissa Caldwell, editors. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.

- Poppendieck, Janet. "Food Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality," in *Food and Culture, A Reader*, second edition. New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Rolls, Edmund T. "Neural Processing Underlying Food Selection." In *Food Preferences and Taste - Continuity and Change*. Helen Macbeth, editor. Providence and Oxford: Berhahn Books, 1997.
- Rozin, Paul. "Food is Fundamental, Fun, Frightening, and Far-Reaching." Online pdf.
- Snyder, Michael. "Big Corporations Have an Overwhelming Power Over Our Food Supply." The Economic Collapse 14 July 2014. Global Research. <http://www.globalresearch.ca/big-corporations-have-an-overwhelming-amount-of-power-over-our-food-supply/5391615>
- Sutton, David E. "Synesthesia, Memory, and the Taste of Home," in *The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink*. Carolyn Korsmeyer, editor. New York: Berg, 2005.
- Theophano, Janet S. " 'I Gave Him Cake': An interpretation of Two Italian-American Weddings." In *Creative Ethnicity: Symbols and Strategies of Contemporary Ethnic Life*, Stephen Stern and John Allan Cicala, editors. Logan: Utah University Press, 1991.

Grading

Course Elements	Percent [or points]
Discussion and participation (Zoom sessions, lectures, blog posts, and discussions)	35%
Site visit report	20%
Presentations	25%
Final project	20%
TOTAL	100%

Grade Scale:

A	93 or more points
A-	90 - 92 points
B+	87 - 89 points
B	83 - 86 points
B-	80 - 82 points
C+	77 - 79 points
C	73 - 76 points
C-	70 - 72 points
D	60 - 69 points
F	59 points and below

Course Policies

COMMUNICATION:

- Faculty will be available at their Goucher email address and will respond to queries within 24-48 hours.
- Course participants are responsible for maintaining continuous involvement with faculty, fellow students and student groups. In particular, participation in all online discussions is required. Ongoing

communication allows you to gain deeper insights into the content, activities and assignments in the course. Please give notice of any obstacle that prevents this.

- You are encouraged to ask questions whenever information needs clarifying.
- For questions pertaining to your assignments: send an email directly to the instructor (please do not post personal questions on the Discussion Board).
- For questions about assignments that may be interesting and helpful to other class members: please use the News Forum.
- For problems with technical aspects of the website: contact helpdesk@goucher.edu (you may copy the instructor).

MISSED WORK:

You are responsible for material covered in the course. It is your sole responsibility to obtain any materials missed.

Late Policy:

For proper graduate student learning to occur, pacing of content mastery is critical. Therefore, assignments are to be completed on time. If extreme circumstances prevent an assignment to be completed in a timely fashion, please notify me before the assignment is due so a new date can be negotiated. Only follow-ups completed by the due date can be redone. Late assignments without such notification will be docked.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

All final work products are to be the independent work of each student and stored in the electronic portfolio. Suspected violations of the Honor Code will be referred to the Academic Honor Board. For a full description of the code and what constitutes a violation of the code, refer to the Goucher Handbook or online at www.goucher.edu/x1292.xml.