

**ANTHROPOLOGY 212  
FOOD AND CULTURE**

**BULLETIN INFORMATION**

ANTH 212 – Food and Culture (3 credit hours)

**Course Description:**

Biological and cultural interactions affecting foodways around the world, and associated ethical issues.

**SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW**

We can't talk about food without talking about the people who produce/gather, distribute, consume, and attach meaning to food. In this course we explore foodways, or food within a social and cultural context. This course provides students with a multi-cultural overview of food as a cultural and gender marker, social rules associated with foods, foods associated with various stages of life in different cultures, and how human nutritional needs are negotiated within cultures. We examine these issues at multiple levels, from ethnographies of specific groups to how globalization and commodification of food affect societies. Access to local, healthy, and culturally meaningful food lies at the heart of food security and human rights. Food commodification and globalization result in asymmetrical access to food, knowledge, power, and ultimately health. We focus equally on cultural and ethical issues relevant to the topics covered.

**ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Upon successful completion of ANTH 212, students will be able to:**

1. List the subfields of anthropology and tell how each intersects with food studies;
2. Demonstrate linkages between food and ethics, and identity, gender, age, nutrition, and health;
3. Outline how industrialized food fits in today's globalized world;
4. Give examples of ethical responsibilities in human subject research;
5. List contributing factors to food justice problems;
6. Be professionally and nationally certified for Human Subject Research;
7. Apply the scientific method by stating a testable hypothesis, researching the topic, compiling data, and evaluating the findings;
8. Conduct an oral interview and outline methodological and ethical considerations in conducting ethnographic research.

**SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS**

1. Pollan, Michael. 2006. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. Penguin.

2. {VSR} Required readings online to complete CITI 5-hour human subject certification course. Each quiz for this online course is preceded by substantial embedded or linked readings.

Example readings, shown by Class number:

3. Class 3 {VSR} Zwart 2000. A Short History of Food Ethics. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 12:113-126.
4. Class 5 {VSR} Van Daele 2013. "Cooking" Life: An Anthropologist Blends in with Everyday Sustenance and Relationality in Sri Lanka. *Food and Foodways* 21(1):66-85. (Moral dilemma)
5. Class 6 {GSS and VSR} Douglas 1972. Deciphering a Meal. *Daedalus* 101:61-81.
6. Class 8 {GSS} Blake et al. 2007. Classifying Foods in Context: How Adults Categorize Foods for Different Eating Settings. *Appetite* 49:500-510.
7. Class 14 {VSR} Frank 2015. Exploring Infant Feeding Practices in Food Insecure Households: What is the Real Issue? *Food and Foodways* 23:186-209.
8. Class 15 {VSR} Dixon 2014. Learning to See Food Justice. *Agriculture and Human Values* 31:175-184.
9. {VSR}: Richardson et al. 2012. Are Neighbourhood Food Resources Distributed Inequitably by Income and Race in the USA? *Epidemiological Findings across the Urban Spectrum BMJ Open* 2(2):e000698.
10. Class 19 {GSS} Dawdy 2010. "A Wild Taste": Food and Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Louisiana. *Ethnohistory* 57(3):389-414.
11. Class 25 {VSR} Gvion 2006. Cuisines of Poverty as Means of Empowerment: Arab Food in Israel. *Agriculture and Human Values* 23:299-312.
12. Class 27 {VSR} Van Esterik 1999. Right to Food; Right to Feed; Right to be Fed. The Intersection of Women's Rights and the Right to Food. *Agriculture and Human Values* 16(2):225-232.
13. Class 28 {GSS} Kahn 1998. "Men Are Taro" (They Cannot be Rice): Political Aspects of Food Choices in Wamira, Papua New Guinea, in *Food and Gender, Identity and Power*.
14. Class 36 {VSR} Delind 2006. Of Bodies, Place, and Culture: Re-Situating Local Food. *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 19:121-146.
15. Class 40 {GSS} Locher et al. 2005. Comfort Foods: An Exploratory Journey into the Social and Emotional Significance of Food. *Food and Foodways* 13(4):273-297. [Include any other required materials]

## **SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS**

1. **Online 4-question quizzes on assigned readings** - Due by class time of the day the reading is discussed. Readings should be read (and for those numbered, questions answered online on Blackboard) BEFORE class begins on the date they are listed. Reading questions go offline at class start time on the day a reading is listed in the syllabus. Your top 20 online reading scores will be counted out of the posted online reading quizzes. Additional extra readings are posted – answer those questions by the deadline for extra credit.
2. **Seven assignments:**
  - a. **CITI human subject research, professional certification** (must pass 5-hour online course);

- b. Class food and recipe share** (bring a dish to share with class, and share story and recipe for our compiled course cookbook; food shared on Project Workdays);
- c. Class project pre-project reflections** (answer questions related to class project);
- d. Short position paper on whether genetically modified food should be labeled.**

You are an intern in the office of a state senator. She has asked you to write her a short 3-4 page Briefing Paper on whether or not genetically engineered food should be specially labeled. The paper has the following sections: (1) Short introductory paragraph briefly explaining what is meant by genetic engineering (so a state senator could understand). (2) A second introductory paragraph setting out the basic issues (including at least two moral or ethical issues) connected with labeling of genetically engineered foods and the players involved (the stakeholders who are for or against such labeling or who would be involved in implementation of labeling). You will be graded on how many of the different stakeholders you identify. This is the section that is often inadequate, so do your research thoroughly before writing this. This may become two paragraphs: one on the stakeholders who will tend to be against labeling, and one on the stakeholders who will tend to be for labeling. (3) Pros or arguments FOR labeling GE foods. Include at least 5 substantiated facts for which you demonstrate good understanding. (4) Cons or arguments AGAINST labeling GE foods. Include at least 5 substantiated facts for which you demonstrate good understanding. (5) A short summary statement that draws together the basic issues (including at least two moral or ethical issues), the players, and the positions they are likely to take so that the senator will be prepared for the upcoming debate. (6) Extra to the 3-4 pages of writing, include a References Cited section.
- e. Food advertisement comparison and analysis.** How do marketing techniques influence what we eat? How is culture reflected in the ad? Today, we must navigate a world filled with advertising and consumer marketing. Both are embedded within and take advantage of cultural expectations. For example, gender or age roles are assigned or assumed. By learning to examine this profusion of messages with a critical eye, we will be better able to make healthful and responsible food choices. For the purposes of this class, implicit cultural stereotypes or rules should be made explicit. Advertising may be targeted toward a specific group for particular products and brands. Advertising can not only aim at segments, it can help shape segments in the population. In this Assignment, the full context is not needed: analyze the ad more or less on its own. For example, if a woman is in the ad, is she portrayed as a sex object desirable to men, as a caretaker/homemaker, as a sophisticated urbanite, or how? If a man is portrayed in the ad, is he portrayed as an exemplar of what a man should be, as a sex object desirable to women, as a father capable of fixing things, or how? Or if both a man and a woman are portrayed, how do they interact? Or is a family unit portrayed, and how? Are generations portrayed? Ethnicity? Class or level of education? Does the ad accurately portray or does it distort society? How does the ad try to achieve its marketing goals – for example, does it offer a “reason why” to buy the product? Or is it more oriented to an emotional appeal? Does the ad feature the product or does it focus on the people?

Collect two food ads from magazines, the Internet, or by taking a digital picture of a billboard or other advertising such as an ad in a magazine. Write a half-page single-spaced analysis of each ad, followed by a one-page comparison, for two pages in total. Who does the ad target, and how? Briefly, what is shown? (describe the ad in a sentence or two). What message is conveyed? What cultural information appears to you to be embedded in the ad? (e.g., women should lose weight; men should have fast cars and sexy girlfriends; parents or children should eat healthy?). What to include in your full-page comparison: Compare the two ads (you should have chosen ads that CAN be compared): how do they support each other in a view of the culture, or how do they differ? How do they portray ethnicity, class, gender, or age? Do they both try to achieve their marketing goals in the same way, or not (and what is that way)? What moral or ethical issues are raised because of these ads?

If you chose to examine an ad for the same product, but in two different countries, point out the ways in which each ad was geared to target members of *that* country. If you chose to examine an ad for a similar product, but for two different age groups, point out the ways in which each ad was geared to target each age group. And so on. If you could not cover any of the elements in your half-page ad analysis, cover them here. Potential ad pairs: Same product, two different countries; Same or similar product, two different target audiences (e.g., cereal, snack); Similar product, two different time periods with different (or the same) cultural expectations; Different products, same target audiences . . . and so on – you can figure out what two ads might make interesting comparisons!

- f. **Family food traditions** (list of your traditions, and description of two of them);
  - g. **Co-lead discussion** of the ethical aspects of a course topic, using the ethical framework presented in the first VESR reading/lecture and subsequent readings/lectures. Individual two-page summary paper due one week after the class discussion.
3. **Class Project:** Students participate in a class research project involving the collection of standardized interviews about some aspect of food: topic examples include (1) snacks and (2) understandings of “vegetable”. Insofar as we continue to enjoy access, we maintain a class vegetable garden here on campus.

Write or revise standardized interview; collect verbal interviews and enter data; hypothesis approval; tables approval; analysis completion; short (4-page) written paper or short movie; presentation.

## **SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS**

**NOTE:** VSR components are bolded, as are VSR readings.

Class 1 Introduction and Setting the Context for this Course.

Class 2 Why Do Anthropologists Study Food and Foodways?

Short video clips: Nourish: Food + Community: Why Eat Local (1:50); Edible Education (3:56); Urban Farms (1:39).

Read: Nabhan 2002. excerpts from *Coming Home to Eat: The Pleasures and Politics of Local Foods*.

**Class 3 Food and Ethics**

**Read: Zwart 2000.** A Short History of Food Ethics.

**Assign: CITI certification;** Food share/recipe; Discussion leader duties

**Class 4** Plant our Class Vegetable Garden.

**Class 5** Anthropologically Thinking About Food, and **ethical dilemmas in conducting field work**

Read: **Van Daele 2013.** "Cooking" Life: An Anthropologist Blends in with Everyday Sustenance and Relationality in Sri Lanka.

**Class 6** Structural Approaches to Studying Food

**Read: Douglas 1972.** Deciphering a Meal.

Murcott. 1982. The Cultural Significance of Food and Eating.

**Class 7** Ethnographic Example of a Structural Approach

Read: Meigs 1997. Food as a Cultural Construction.

**Class 8** Food Schema – guest speaker from USC Public Health

Read: Blake et al. 2007. Classifying Foods in Context: How Adults Categorize Foods for Different Eating Settings.

**Class 9** Ethnographic Methods

**Class 10** CLASS PROJECT Introduction and Overview

DUE: Assignment C.

**Class 11 Ethics of Human Subject Research**

**DUE: Assignment A.**

**Class 12** CLASS PROJECT Discussion and Workshop. **Conducting ethical interviews.**

Video clips: Nourish: Food + Community: Wake Up! (1:45); Supermarket Secrets (1:36); Twinkie vs. Carrot (1:39)

**Class 13** Diet and Nutrition

Read: Anderson 2005 Human Nutritional Needs.

**Class 14** Foods along Life's Passage

Read: Farb and Armelagos 1980. The Life Passage.

**Frank 2015.** Exploring Infant Feeding Practices in Food Insecure Households: What is the Real Issue?

**Class 15 Food Justice, Food Security**

Read: **Dixon 2014.** Learning to See Food Justice.

**Richards et al. 2012** Inequitable Distribution of Neighbourhood Food Resources.

**Grauel and Chambers 2014.** Food Deserts and Migrant Farm Workers: Assessing Access in Oregon's Willamette Valley.

**Class 16** Why Eat Distasteful Food?

Read: Johns 1994. Ambivalence to the Palatability Factors in Wild Foods.

**Class 17** Food as Medicine

Read: Anderson 1997. Traditional Medical Values of Food.

**Class 18** PROJECT WORKDAY

DUE: First interview typed and loaded onto online form.

**Class 19** Historical Foodways

Read: Dawdy 2010. "A Wild Taste": Food and Colonialism in Eighteenth-Century Louisiana.

**Eden 2008.** excerpts from *The Early American Table: Food and Society in the New World*.

Wagner 2008. What Seasonal Diet at a Fort Ancient Community Reveals about Coping Mechanisms.

**Class 20** Globalization of Food: **Asymmetrical Access to Healthy Food**

Read: Mintz 1997. Time, Sugar, and Sweetness.

Goody 1997. Industrial Food: Towards the Development of a World Cuisine.

**Class 21** Heritage Food and Heirloom Crops: **Morality in Heritage**

Read: Veteto 2008. The History and Survival of Traditional Heirloom Vegetable Varieties in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of Western North Carolina.

Shields 2015. excerpts from *Southern Provisions: The Creation & Revival of a Cuisine*.

DUE: Hypothesis and table headings.

**Class 22** **Genetically Engineering Food: Class Discussion**

**DUE: Assignment D.**

**Read: Carr and Levidow 2000.** Exploring the Links between Science, Risk, Uncertainty, and Ethics in Regulatory Controversies about Genetically Modified Crops.

**Class 23** Food as a Social Marker

Read: Anderson 2005. Me, Myself and the Others: Food as a Social Marker.

**Class 24** Identity through Food

DUE: All interviews completed and loaded onto online form; Approval of hypothesis/headings.

Read: de Meret and Geyzen 2015. Tastes of Home: Exploring Food and Place in Twentieth-Century Europe.

Video: Americans Try Filipino Street Food (2:37)

**Class 25** **Ethical Issues with Food Identity**

**Read: Gvion 2006.** Arab Food in Israel.

Allison 1997. Japanese Mothers and Obentōs.

Video: Hardee's Texas Thickburgers; Burger King Manthem; Powerful Yoghurt (commercials).

Assigned: Assignment E.

**Class 26** Food and Gender

Read: **Cavassa et al. 2015.** Gender-Based Stereotypes about Food.

Julier and Lindenfeld 2005. Mapping Men onto the Menu.

**Class 27** **Gender, Food Justice, and Food Security**

**Read: Van Esterik 1999.** Right to Food; Right to Feed; Right to Be Fed. The Intersection of Women's Rights and the Right to Food.

**Allen and Sachs 2012.** Women and Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food.

Video: If Women's Roles in Ads Were Played by Men (1:38)

**Class 28** Ethnographic Examples on Food and Gender

Read: Pollock 1998. Food and Sexual Identity among the Culina.

Kahn 1998. Men are Taro.

**DUE: Assignment E.**

**Class 29** CLASS PROJECT WORKDAY

DUE: Filled-in project presentation tables.

**Class 30** Omnivore's Dilemma

Read: Introduction, Ch. 1-2.

Class 31 Omnivore's Dilemma

Read: Ch. 3-7.

Class 32 Omnivore's Dilemma

Read: Ch. 8-10.

Class 33 Video: Food, Inc. first half

**Read: Kenner 2009.** The Making of Food, Inc.

Class 34 Video: Food Inc. second half

Class 35 *Omnivore's Dilemma* and *Food, Inc.* Follow-up and **ethical dilemmas**

Read: Omnivore's Dilemma Ch. 11-14.

DUE: Project paper.

Class 36 **The Ethics of Eating Locally**

**Read: Feagan 2007.** The Place of Food: Mapping out the "Local" in Local Food Systems.

**Delind 2006.** Of Bodies, Place, and Culture: Re-Situating Local Food.

Class 37 Local Food – guest speaker

Class 38 Local Food

**Read: Scharber and Danks 2016.** Do Locavores Have a Dilemma? Economic Discourse and the Local Food Critique.

Class 39 Food Traditions/Food Identity

Mini, in-class assignment relating to Assignment F

DUE: Revised project paper.

Video: Sauerkraut (7:36); Food Traditions: U.S. Southern Food (6:04)

Class 40 Student Presentations on Assignment F

Read: Locher et al. 2005. Comfort Foods: An Exploratory Journey into the Social and Emotional

Significance of Food.

DUE: Assignment F.

Class 41 WORKSHOP on Making Presentations

Class 42 Food and Culture Course Wrap-Up: **The Intersection of Foodways and Ethics**

Read: Mintz 2002. Food and Eating: Some Persisting Questions.

FINAL EXAMINATION WEEK: Project Presentations by students, open to the public