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ANTH/FSST/SOC 375 The Anthropology of Food and Eating: Understanding Self and Others

Course Syllabus

Fall 2021

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: None

Class Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:45am - 1.15pm

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:00pm - 4:00pm (FSSP Office, First Floor)

Course Type: Standard Course

Lab Fee: € 60.00

Course Description

This course will address food-related issues from an anthropological perspective. It will examine the role that food plays in shaping: group and personal identities; ethnic affiliations in a global world; religious boundaries through rituals, taboos, and avoidances; and revitalization of local and global communities. Through reading assignments, and ethnographic research in the city of Perugia, students will explore how food traditions and local food are maintained and transformed over time and space, and how culinary knowledge is used to mark cultural belonging and differences. The course will focus on food as cultural heritage through an analysis of culinary tourism, the culture of restaurants, and processes of patrimonialization. Furthermore, it will apply gendered perspectives on the body and analyze power dynamics in Italian families through food consumption and preparation. Students will study food as a site of cultural transmission but also of dissent and resistance. The course incorporates a short ethnographic project on restaurants and cultural heritage. Through these exercises in qualitative research, students will become engaged in original research in and out the classroom.

Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. *identify* the connections between contemporary Umbrian, Italian, and global food cultures through the examination of the food practices of individuals and communities;
2. *recognize* the environmental, sociocultural, and economic factors that affect food supplies, food security, and health.
3. *design* an appropriate, ethical ethnographic project and—working directly with local partners who are actively involved in various aspects of the food system (production, distribution, consumption)—collect data on how individual food behaviors are shaped by their society's foodways;
4. *carry out* that project while approaching cultural differences with an unbiased framework;
5. *communicate* their research about various aspects of contemporary food systems using twenty-first-century tools while practicing systematic, ethical, and public-facing scholarship.

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Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures Course requirements that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome
understand how individual food behaviors are shaped by their society's food cultures	Fieldnotes Assignments
approach cultural differences with an unbiased framework	Discussion Questions
increase their knowledge of local and global cultures through the examination of the food practices of individuals and communities	Group Discussions on Reading Assignments
design and carry out a qualitative research project	Ethnographic Essay
apply ethnographic research skills to contexts in which the cultural, political, and emotional value of food can be analysed and critically presented	In-Class Presentation on "Food and Identity- A Personal Heritage"

Course Materials

Readings—Course reader available online on Moodle.

Assessment

Participation	10%	(8%+2%)
Weekly Quizzes	10%	
"Food and Identity: A Personal Heritage" recipe preparation and tasting	20%	
Field notes journal 1	P/F	
Field notes journal 2	15%	
Field notes journal 3	15%	
Final essay	30%	

Grading

Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

Letter Grade Range	Numerical Score Equivalent	Student Performance
A	93% - 100%	Exceptional
A-	90% - 92%	Excellent
B+	87% - 89%	Superior
B	83% - 86%	
B-	80% - 82%	

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C+	77% - 79%	Satisfactory
C	73% - 76%	
C-	70% - 72%	
D+	67% - 69%	Low Pass
D	63% - 66%	
D-	60% - 62%	
F	59% or less	Fail (no credit)

Course Requirements

Grades are based on participation, weekly quizzes, field notes, journal entries, a final essay and a presentation.

Participation (10%: 8%+2%)—For a spirited discussion, students’ active attention and participation are required. Class participation grade is based on five points:

1. Being on time in class and respectful behavior
2. Working in pairs/in group, and showing helpfulness towards classmates
3. Readings should be done for the class the day they are assigned. In order to show that they have done the readings, students must raise their hand in class offering their perspective on the reading, and/or asking questions about parts that they didn’t fully understand.
4. Students will be asked questions in discussion groups on the main ideas and concepts found in the readings. Ability to engage in such discussions is crucial for a participatory classroom environment.
5. Students are invited to come to office hours at least one time by Week 8. Students’ office hours visit is worth 2% of their final grade. More info about office hours policy on Moodle course page.

Weekly Quizzes (10%)— Students will be assigned a short quiz every week. The quiz is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like and only their highest grade counts. There will be a combination of *technical questions* and *content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The technical questions will initially just help students learn the class’s policies and administrative procedures. They’ll also test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author’s argument and conducting ethnographic research.

Food and Identity A Personal Heritage Recipe Presentation and Tasting (20%)—Interview a family member and ask them for a recipe that is important for them and/or for your family. Alternatively, find a recipe that’s important for you. Tell the class the story of this recipe, reflecting on the meaning that it has for you or your family, and how this relates to your cultural background. Cook the recipe at home and bring a small sample to taste. Fill out and print the file given by the professor.

Please note: each person will be reimbursed up to a maximum of €10 for buying ingredients/materials needed for the recipe. The receipt must be given to the administration office. No refund is possible without a valid receipt.

Field Note Journal (15% each)—Field notes journal entries refer to the written account derived from data collected during observations and interviews. Each entry should be typed with full sentences (min 4- max 6 pages, Garamond, size 11 font) and sent by email. They must be divided into **two sections**:

On the left (usually longer, descriptive and with many details): artifacts, décor, and elaboration of food service, food, people’s behavior, what the staff/owners tell us.

On the right (usually shorter, condensed and more analytical): MUST CONTAIN 1) some level of interpretation or a hypothesis about what you saw in the observations 2) at least one reference to the readings you have done

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Final Ethnographic Essay (30%)—Title: “Food as Cultural Heritage in Three Perugian Restaurants” (min 5 - max 6 pages, Garamond, size 11 font, 1.5 spaced lining, bibliography on a separate sheet).

The final essay must include the readings you have done for this class and original data from your own fieldwork. Bibliography - **At least five references** from the reader + **a minimum of two** from other scholarly sources (only peer-reviewed scientific articles/books in the social sciences) that you find independently. For the references, please use Harvard in-text referencing style.

In the essay you should be able to answer the following questions:

- Why are restaurants more than just places where food is exchanged for money?
- What meanings are given to local foods in the restaurants that we visited?
- What is the relationship with the past and the vision for the future proposed by restaurants and food joints?

Submitting Work Late

If students submit work after the deadline, they will incur a 5% grade deduction for each working day the assignment is late. Working days are Monday through Friday. To avoid penalty, students must get approval for an extension at least one day prior to the deadline. The instructor will not accept work that is later than seven working days.

Incomplete/Longer Assignments

If assignments are shorter or longer than the assigned number of pages, there will be a 5% grade deduction for each missing or extra page.

Attendance Policy

The two dinners in the evening, and the visit to Chiosco Antica Salumeria Granieri during class time, are part of your fieldwork and considered mandatory field trips.

Absences for Covid-related circumstances: in order to keep the entire Umbra community healthy and to comply with local laws, you may not enter the Umbra premises if you have a temperature of 37.5 °C (99.5 °F) or higher. We also ask students that display strong cold or flu-like symptoms to take proper precautions and not risk spreading any type of illness. Students may attend classes remotely and without academic penalty via Zoom in case of self-isolation or illness during the Fall 2021 semester.

Class attendance (in person or through live connection) is mandatory. Students are allowed two “free” absences, which do not need to be justified. However, it is considered common courtesy to inform the instructor of your absence when possible. It is the students’ responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity (sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class). Each additional absence, unless for a very serious reason, will lower the students’ grade by one grade level (i.e., a final grade of a B+ would be lowered to a B). If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. It is also the policy of the Institute that any student who has eight or more absences automatically fails the class.

Except in the case of medical emergencies, absences are not accepted when tests are scheduled; tests cannot be made up. Furthermore, scheduled times and dates indicated for exams, quizzes, oral presentations, and any other graded assignments cannot be changed for any reason. Even if more sections of the same class are activated, students may only take exams during the scheduled times and dates for the section they are enrolled in.

Academic Integrity

All forms of cheating (i.e. copying during exam either from a fellow student or making unauthorized use of notes) and plagiarism (i.e. presenting the ideas or words of another person for academic evaluation without acknowledging the source) will be handled according to the Institute Academic Policy, which can be found in the Umbra Institute Academic Policies and Conduct Guidelines.

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Classroom Policy

Please refrain from computers, cell phones, and other electronic devices during class time or during course activities. Active class participation is part of students' final grades. Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies.

Note: This course may have one or more meetings in the didactic garden located in Via delle Prome 17.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1

Tue 21 *Introduction to Anthropology of Food.*

Sept. In this first class, the instructor will explain the structure of the course, with special reference to Italian food production and food culture.

Readings

Crowther, G. (2018) "Setting the Anthropological Table", pp. XIX-XXXI in Crowther, G. *Eating Culture: An Anthropological Guide to Food*. Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press.

Thu 23 *Bio-Cultural Perspective on Nutrition.*

Sept. While it is easy to see that the direct consequences of food intake are biological, it is also apparent that the nature of that food intake is shaped by a wide variety of geographical, social, psychological, religious, economic, and political factors. Today's lecture will explore the concept of culture from an anthropological point of view and of food as a communication system for groups and individuals.

Readings

Fischler, C. (1988) "Food, Self and identity", pp. 275-292, *Social Science Information*, n. 27.

Scrinins, G. (2008) "On the Ideology of Nutritionism", pp. 39-48, *Gastronomica*, n. 8(1).

Week 2

Tue 28 *Qualitative research methods and ethnographic research*

Sept. In this lecture students will discuss the centrality of ethnographic work in anthropology and will explore tools for doing research in urban settings through participant observation and ethnographic interviews.

Readings

Fetterman, David M. (2010) *Ethnography: Step-by-Step*. 3rd ed. Applied Social Research Methods Series 17. Los Angeles: SAGE pp. 20-26; 33-53.

Shah, A. (2017) "Ethnography?: Participant observation, a potentially revolutionary praxis". *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 7(1), pp. 45-59.

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Thu 30
Sept. *Restaurant Ethnographic Fieldwork, Activity 1 (Dal Mi Cocco)*. Dinner Dal Mi Cocco Restaurant (Please **always** remind me of your special dietary requirements in advance). Do an online research on the restaurant, bring pen and paper to write your notes.
Meet at 8.25pm at the Fountain

Reading

Emerson, R. M. Fretz, R.I. Shaw, L. L., (2007) "Participant Observation and Fieldnotes", pp. 371-387 in Atkinson, P. et al *Handbook of Ethnography*, Los Angeles, London, New Dehli, Singapore: Sage Publications

Additional Reading

Vivanco, L.A. (2017) *Field Notes: A Guided Journal for Doing Anthropology*, Oxford University Press

Week 3

Tue 5
Oct. *Social Functions of Food*.
Food is a vehicle for expressing friendship, smoothing social intercourse, and showing concern. It is also ridden with status symbolism and is manipulated to demonstrate differences in social contexts.

Readings

Meigs, A. (1997) "Food as a Cultural Construction", pp. 95-106 in Counihan, C. Van Esterik, P. eds. (1997) *Food and Culture. A Reader*. New York, Routledge.

Vallianatos, H. and Raine, K. (2008) "Consuming Food and Constructing Identities among Arabic and South Asian Immigrant Women", *Food, Culture and Society* 11(3), pp. 355-373.

Thu 7
Oct. *Food, Religion, and Taboos*.
Food is an important part of religious observance for many different faiths, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. In this class we will analyse different theoretical approaches to food classifications and prohibitions.

Readings

Douglas, M. (1966) "The Abomination of the Leviticus", pp. 48-58 in Counihan, C. Van Esterik, P. eds. (2013) *Food and Culture. A Reader*. New York, Routledge.

Harris, M. (1974) "Mother Cow" pp. 11-32 in Harris, M. (1974) *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*. New York, Random House.

Assignment: Hand in Field Notes Journal 1 (Dal Mi Cocco). This assignment is meant as a trial and will receive a Pass/Fail grade if it is handed in on time following the directions. From next time, journal entries will be graded according to the guidelines provided.

Week 4

Tue 12
Oct. *Food and Globalisation*
The production and consumption of food have been heavily affected by the globalisation process. Today's lecture will explore the multiple dynamics investing the meanings and values of food in our current globalised world.

Readings

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Crowther, G. "Local Digestion: Making the Global at Home", pp. 255-276 in *Eating Culture: An Anthropological Guide to Food*, by Crowther, G., Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press.

Bestor, T.C. (2000) "How Sushi Went Global", pp. 13-20 in *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader* (2005), edited by James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell, Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing.

Thu 14 Oct. *Food as Cultural Heritage*

Heritage usually means an act of transmission from the past to the present. Today, the class will critically analyze the concept of "heritagization" and think about the ways in which social actors give value to food cultures in different settings.

Readings

Matta, R. (2013) "Valuing Native Eating: The Modern Roots of Peruvian Food Heritage" in *Anthropology of Food* [online] S8 | 2013 URL : <http://journals.openedition.org/aof/7361>.

Ascione, E. (2017) "Food and Cultural Heritage: Preserving, Re-inventing and Exposing Food Cultures", pp 301-313 in *The Handbook of Food and Popular Culture*, edited by Peter Naccarato and Kathleen LeBesco. London, U.K.: Bloomsbury Publishers.

Additional Readings

Di Giovine M.A. Brulotte R.L. eds. (2013) *Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage*, Farnham, Burlington: Ashgate Publishing. In the library.

Week 5

Tue 19 Oct. *Food Artisans Ethnographic Fieldwork, Activity 2 (Chiosco Antica Salumeria Granieri)*
The class will visit a local food artisan for participant observation, note taking, and formal/informal interviews. Do an online research on the food vendor, bring pen and paper to write your notes.

After this visit, anytime during the week, you will have to carry out (in pairs) 30 minutes of observation and note taking to gather more data for your final paper.

Please note: each person will be reimbursed up to a maximum of 5€ for buying food and drink needed for this assignment. The receipt must be given to the administration office. No refund is possible without a valid receipt.

Reading

Sherman Heil, B. (2007) "Ethnographic Interviewing", pp. 388-402 in Atkinson, P. et al *Handbook of Ethnography*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications

"Ethnographies of Where We Eat": The Anthropology of Restaurants.

Thu 21 Oct.

Restaurants often represent the cultures of cities, regions, ethnic groups, and nations. From the sensual and local, to the symbolic and global, restaurants constitute a social phenomenon that can be studied through ethnographic practice.

Readings

Beriss, D. and Sutton, D.E. (2007) *The Restaurant Book: Ethnographies of where we eat*: Bloomsbury Publishing, London, New York, pp. 1-10.

Yan, Y. (2008) "Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing", in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik, pp. 500-522: Routledge, New York

SEMESTER BREAK

Week 6

Tue 2 Nov. *Industrial food production and alternative food movements: an anthropological perspective*

In today's class we will analyse how industrial food production has affected the ways in which we interact with food, highlighting the role of alternative food movements and food activism as a response to the dominant global food system.

Readings

Wilk, R. (2006) "From Wild Seeds to Artisanal Cheese", pp. 13-29 in *Fast Food/Slow Food: The Cultural Economy of the Global Food System* edited by Wilk, R., Lanham, MD and Plymouth: Altamira Press.

Harper, K. and Siniscalchi, V. (2019) "Value and Values in Food Projects in Europe", pp. 1-14 in *Food Values in Europe* edited by Harper K. and Siniscalchi, V., London: Bloomsbury.

Assignment: Hand in Field Notes Journal 2 (Chiosco Antical Salumeria Granieri) divided in two sections: a) the class visit b) the independent fieldnotes.

Thu 4 Nov. *Slow Food and the Politics of "Virtuous Globalization"*

The Slow Food movement advocates the protection of cultural landscapes, local traditions, and economies within debates about cultural homogenization and Europeanization. The class will analyze how niche productions are linked by this social and cultural movement.

Readings

Leitch, A.M. (2003) "Slow Food and the Politics of Pork Fat: Italian Food and European Identity." *Ethnos* 68 (4). pp. 437-462

Laudan, R. (2004) "Slow Food, The French Terroir Strategy, and Culinary Modernism." *Food, Culture and Society* 7(2) 133-144.

Browse: www.slowfood.com

Week 7

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Tue 9 Nov. *Restaurant Ethnographic Fieldwork, Activity 3.* Dinner at Osteria a Priori (Please **always** remind me of your special dietary requirements in advance). Do an online research on the restaurant, bring pen and paper to write your notes.
Meet at 7,30pm at the Fountain

Reading

Siniscalchi, V. (2018) "Political Taste: Inclusion and Exclusion in the Slow Food Movement", pp. 185-198 in *Making Taste Public: Ethnographies of Food and the Senses* edited by Counihan, C. and Højlund S., London: Bloomsbury.

Additional Reading

Mars, G. (2007) "Food, Family and Tradition in Northern Italy: The Rise and Fall of a Michelin-starred Family Restaurants", pp. 167-190 in Beriss, D. And Sutton, D. Eds. *The Restaurant Book: Ethnographies of where we eat.* Oxford and New York, Berg

Thu 11 Nov. *Food, Gender, and Family Life.*
Food provision and preparation are gendered activities. In Italy, domestic space has traditionally been associated with femininity, but this has changed in recent years with more women in paid labor and more men preparing food for their families. Today, the class will analyze how gender shapes food roles.

Readings

Counihan, C. (2014) "Women, Gender, and Agency in Italian Food Activism", pp. 61-76 in *Food Activism: Agency, Democracy and Economy* edited by Siniscalchi, V. and Counihan, C., London and New York: Bloomsbury.

Zhen, W (2019) *Food Studies. A hands-on guide.* London: Bloomsbury, "Gender" section.

Week 8

Tue 16 Nov. *Food and Identity. A Personal Heritage Recipe Presentation and Tasting (A-L)*
Interview a family member and ask them for a recipe that is important for them and/or for your family. Bring a sample in class
Please note: each person will be reimbursed up to a maximum of 10€ for buying ingredients/materials needed for the recipe. The receipt must be given to the administration office. No refund is possible without a valid receipt.

Assignment: Hand in Field Notes Journal 3 (Osteria a Priori)

Thu 18 Nov. *Food and Identity. A Personal Heritage Recipe Presentation and Tasting (M-Z)*
Interview a family member and ask them for a recipe that is important for them and/or for your family. Bring a sample in class
Please note: each person will be reimbursed up to a maximum of 10€ for buying ingredients/materials needed for the recipe. The receipt must be given to the administration office. No refund is possible without a valid receipt.

Week 9

Tue 23
Nov.

Food, Migration, and Ethnic Identity: The Case of Italian-Americans.

Migration is a global phenomenon caused not only by economic factors, but also by social, political, cultural, and environmental factors. Diasporic groups and individuals that migrate and settle out of their country of origins re-create, change, and adapt their food cultures in the new settings.

Readings

Di Giovine, Michael A. 2010. "La Vigilia Italo-Americana: Revitalizing the Italian-American Family Through the Christmas Eve 'Feast of the Seven Fishes'." *Food and Foodways* 18 (4): 181–208.

Zhen, W (2019) *Food Studies. A hands-on guide*. London: Bloomsbury, pp.77-85

Thu 25
Nov.

The Anthropology of the Body

The relationship between people and their bodies is very complex. Women are often the main provider of nourishment for their families but are expected to be in "control" of their own consumption. Men are also increasingly concerned about constructing corporeal perfection and regulating consumption.

Readings

Bordo, S. (2009) "Not just 'a White Girl's Thing': The changing face of food and body image problems", pp. 263-275 in Counihan, C. Van Esterik, P. eds. (2013) *Food and Culture. A Reader*. New York, Routledge

Parasecoli, F. (2005) "Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men's Fitness Magazines" pp. 284-298 in Counihan, C. Van Esterik, P. eds. (2013) *Food and Culture. A Reader*. New York, Routledge

Week 10

Tue 30
Nov.

The Anthropology of Drinking

During this lecture we will explore how the act of drinking can be analysed through an anthropological perspective. The social and cultural values of drinking will be analysed by taking into account the case of natural wines.

Wilson, T. M. (2005) "Drinking Cultures: Sites and Practices in the Production and Expression of Identity", pp. 1-24 in *Drinking Cultures: Alcohol and Identity* edited by T. M. Wilson. Oxford and New York, Berg

Black, R. E. (2013) "Vino Naturale: Tensions between Nature and Technology in the Glass", pp. 279-294 in *Wine and Culture: Vineyard to Glass* edited by R.E. Black and R. C. Ulin London and New York: Bloomsbury

Additional reading

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Ascione, E., Belsky, J., Nelsen, M., Barbato, M. (2020) "Cultivating Activism through *Terroir*: An Anthropology of Sustainable Winemakers in Umbria, Italy", *Food, Culture & Society* 23(3), pp. 277-295

Food, Tourism and Cultural Change.

Thu 2
Dec. Literature in the anthropology of tourism has analyzed the cultural change that happens in the age of global tourism. Food has often been employed to develop tourism through promotion of "typicality" at food fairs and related events. Food is a powerful tourist attraction and a way to incorporate cultural differences and otherness when travelling.

Readings

Stronza, A. (2001) "Anthropology of Tourism: Forging New Grounds for Ecotourism and other Alternatives", *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Vol. 30, pp. 261-283

Long, L. (2004) "Introduction", pp. xii-xiv/1-19 in Long, L. ed. *Culinary Tourism*, Kentucky University Press

WEEK OF FINAL EXAMS AND SPECIAL ACADEMIC EVENTS

Final essay due before 5.00pm.

Tue 7
Dec.

The Final Exam and Special Academic Events Calendar will be provided later in the semester