



# **ANTH/SOC/FSST 375 - Anthropology of Food and Eating: Understanding Self and Others**

## **Course Syllabus**

### **Spring Semester 2023**

**Instructor:** Clelia Viecelli, PhD

**Credits:** 3

**Contact Hours:** 45

**Prerequisites:** none

**Class Meeting Days & Time:** Group A Mondays and Wednesdays 9:00am - 10:30am; Group B Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:45am - 12:15pm

**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 3:00pm - 5:00pm or by appointment (First floor, FSE Office)

**Course Type:** Standard Course

**Course Fee:** USD\$105

### **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***

Below are the course's learning outcomes, followed by the methods that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome. By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- *identify* the connections between contemporary Umbrian, Italian, and global food cultures through the examination of the food practices of individuals and communities (Weekly Quiz; Field Notes Journal; Final Ethnographic Essay);
- *recognize* the environmental, sociocultural, and economic factors that affect food supplies, food security, and health (Weekly Quiz);
- *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 (Field notes Journal; Presentation on “Food and Identity: A Personal Heritage”);

- *carry out* that project while approaching cultural differences with an unbiased framework (Field notes Journal; Final Ethnographic Essay);
- *communicate* their research about various aspects of contemporary food systems using twenty-first century tools while practicing systematic, ethical, and public-facing scholarship (Recipe Presentation on “Food and Identity: A Personal Heritage”).

## Course Materials

### Readings

A course reader, including all the indicated readings, will be available. The course’s Moodle site is the primary location for readings and assignments.

### Assessment

Attendance	10%
Office Hours	2%
Biweekly Moodle Quizzes	15%
Field notes journal 1	10%
Field notes journal 2	10%
Field notes journal 3	10%
Recipe Presentation and Tasting	15%
Final Ethnographic Essay	28%

### Grading

Students are reminded that it is their responsibility to note the dates of exams and other assignments. No alternative exam dates will be offered and professors are not required to give partial credit for any late work (they do so at their discretion: the Institute’s default policy is no extensions and a zero for any work turned in late). Students who book travel when they have an exam or other assessment will have to change their plans or accept a zero. Letter grades for student work are based on the following percentage scale:

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

**Please note:** decimal numerals between 1-4 are rounded down while 5-9 are rounded up: e.g., expect 89.4 to be 89.0 while 89.5 to round up to 90.

### Course Requirements

Grades are based on the following criteria:

### *Attendance (10%)*

Attendance is an important part of this course. You have two “sick days,” per Institute policy. As long as you are at all the other meetings, you will receive the full 100% for this part of your grade. There are no make-ups offered for attendance.

### *Office Hours (2%)*

Getting to know your professor makes you more comfortable with that person and therefore more likely to ask for help. It also might help for you to ask questions about the various assignments or discuss a paper idea. In this course, you get 2% of your grade for coming at least one time to office hours by Week 11.

### *Quizzes (15%)*

Students will be assigned two short quizzes every week, each of which will be due before class time and will not be reopened. The quiz will be on Moodle and it is not timed. Students can take the quiz as many times as they like, with the recorded grade being the average grade they receive. There will be a combination of *technical*, *methodological*, and *content questions*. The content questions will help students zoom in on the most important ideas of the readings. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author’s argument and research methods used. The technical questions will help students learn the class’s policies and administrative procedures.

### *Field Note Journal (10% each)*

Field notes journal entries refer to the written account derived from data collected during ethnographic observations and interviews at three different food venues in Perugia. Each entry should be typed with full sentences and uploaded on Moodle. 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. Students will find on Moodle a full prompt.

### *“Food and Identity: A Personal Heritage” Recipe Presentation and Tasting (15%)*

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. Students will find on Moodle a full prompt.

### *Final Ethnographic Essay (28%)*

The final ethnographic essay, which is due on Week 13, must include the readings you have done for this class and original data from your own ethnographic fieldwork. Bibliography - **At least five references** from the reader and **a minimum of two** from other scholarly sources (only peer-reviewed scientific articles/books in the social sciences) that you find independently. 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?

Students will find on Moodle a full prompt.

## **Extension & Submitting Late Work**

If students submit work after the deadline, they will incur a 10% grade deduction for each day the assignment is late. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. Students need to email the instructor before the deadline and inform the instructor of their use of the extension. Work submitted after the deadline will receive a grade of zero, not partial credit. As for all policies, exceptions can be made by the Director for students with special accommodations or in case of medical emergencies, etc.

## **Attendance & Lateness Policy**

Class attendance (in person or through live connection) is mandatory. All students are allowed 2 “sick days” (i.e. unexcused absences), which do not need to be justified. It is the student’s responsibility to keep them in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 2 absences will affect your final grade by 2% per absence. Excessive unexcused absences (8 or more) may result in a failing grade or disciplinary action. Three late arrivals to or early departures from class will count as an unexcused absence. Being more than 30 minutes late (or leaving class more than 30 minutes early) counts as an absence. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of the number of absences or late arrivals for each course, and to ask the instructor when in doubt.

If students miss class, they are responsible for obtaining class notes from other students and/or for meeting the professor during office hours. Any work missed in class because of an excused absence may be made up within one week of the return to the class. Any work missed that was a quiz or other test must be made up outside of class time and will, in the interest of intellectual honesty, be a slightly different test than the one given in class.

Presence during mandatory field trips is especially important. Missing a mandatory field trip for a course, unless for a very serious reason that is communicated to Umbra staff in a timely manner, will be considered the equivalent of two unexcused absences. As such, absence from the co-curricular field trip will lower students’ final grade in that course by 4% (the equivalent of two unexcused absences).

Additional absences relating to illness may be approved by the Director but only if a medical certification is provided. 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.

## **Classroom Policy**

Students are expected to follow the policy of the Institute and demonstrate the appropriate respect for the historical premises that the school occupies. Please note that cell phones must be set on silent mode before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions for anything other than note-taking, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

## Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

### WEEK 1

#### **Food: An Anthropological Perspective**

Meeting 1: *Introduction to anthropology of food*

Meeting 2: *Bio-Cultural perspective on nutrition*

#### Readings for the week:

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

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

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

### WEEK 2

#### **Social and Religious Functions of Food**

Meeting 1: *Social functions of food*

Meeting 2: *Food, religion, and taboos*

#### Readings for the week:

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

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.

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

### WEEK 3

#### **Ethnographic Research Methods**

Meeting 1: *Qualitative research methods and ethnographic research*

Meeting 2: *Restaurant Ethnographic Fieldwork, Activity 1 (Ristorante Dal Mi Cocco)*

#### Readings for the week:

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

Paxson, H. (2019) 'Participant-observation and Interviewing Techniques', in Chrzan, J and Brett J. (eds.) *Food Culture: Anthropology, Linguistics, and Food Studies*, New York and Oxford: Berghahn, pp. 92-100.

### WEEK 4

#### **Food as "Invented Tradition"**

Meeting 1: *Food between tradition and innovation*

Meeting 2: *The invention of national cuisines*

Readings for the week:

West, H. G. (2020) 'Crafting innovation: Continuity and change in the "living traditions" of contemporary artisan cheesemakers', *Food and Foodways*, 28(2), pp. 91-116.

Ariel, A. (2012) 'The Hummus Wars', *Gastronomica*, 12(1), pp. 34-42.

Assignments:

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 onwards, journal entries will be graded according to the rubric provided on Moodle.

**WEEK 5**

**Food Globalization and Processes of Heritagization**

Meeting 1: *Food and globalization*

Meeting 2: *Food as cultural heritage*

Readings for the week:

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

Bestor, T. C. (2000) 'How Sushi Went Global', in Watson, J. L. and Caldwell, M L. Caldwell (eds.) *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, Malden, Oxford, Carlton: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 13-20.

Ascione, E. & Fink, C. (2021) 'Italian *Sagre*: Preserving and Re-inventing Cultural Heritage and Community through Food Festivals in Umbria, Italy', *Food, Culture & Society*, DOI: 10.1080/15528014.2021.1873037, selected excerpts

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

**WEEK 6**

**The Anthropology of Restaurants and Street Food**

Meeting 1: *"Ethnographies of Where We Eat": The anthropology of restaurants*

Meeting 2: *Food Artisans Ethnographic Fieldwork, Activity 2 (Chiosco Antica Salumeria Granieri)*

Readings for the week:

Mars, G. (2007) 'Food, Family and Tradition in Northern Italy: The Rise and Fall of a Michelin-starred Family Restaurants', in Beriss, D. and Sutton, D. (eds.) *The Restaurant Book: Ethnographies of Where We Eat*, Oxford and New York: Berg, pp. 167-190.

Parasecoli, F. (2021) 'Eating on the Go in Italy: Between *Cibo di Strada* and Street Food', *Food, Culture & Society*, 24(1), pp. 112-126. doi:[10.1080/15528014.2020.1859901](https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2020.1859901).

**Semester Break**

## WEEK 7

### Alternative Food Movements and Food Activism

Meeting 1: *Industrial food production and alternative food movements: an anthropological perspective*

Meeting 2: *Slow Food and the politics of “virtuous globalization”*

#### Readings for the week:

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

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 & Society*, 7(2), pp. 133-144.

#### Assignments:

Hand in Field Notes Journal 2 (Chiosco Antica Salumeria Granieri).

## WEEK 8

### Food and Gender

Meeting 1: *Food, Gender, and Family Life*

Meeting 2: *Restaurant Ethnographic Fieldwork, Activity 3 (Osteria A Priori)*

#### Readings for the week:

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

Cairns, K., Johnston, J. and Baumann, S. (2010) ‘Caring About Food: Doing Gender in the Foodie Kitchen’, *Gender & Society*, 24(5), pp. 591–615.

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

## WEEK 9

### Anthropology of the Body and Medical Anthropology

Meeting 1: *Cooking food as an embodied practice*

Meeting 2: *Medical anthropology*

#### Readings for the week:

Sutton, D. (2006) ‘Cooking Skills, the Senses, and Memory: The Fate of Practical Knowledge’, in Counihan, C. and Van Esterik, P. (eds.) *Food and Culture. A Reader*. New York, Routledge, pp. 88-109.

Quave, Cassandra Leah, e Andrea Pieroni. 2005. ‘Ritual Healing in Arbereshe Albanian and Italian Communities of Lucania, Southern Italy’. *Journal of Folklore Research* 42 (1): 57–97.

#### Assignments:

Hand in Field Notes Journal 3 (Osteria A Priori).

## WEEK 10

### In-class Presentations of “Food and Identity: A Personal Heritage”

Meeting 1: *In-class Presentations (A-L)*

Meeting 2: *In-class Presentations (M-Z)*

## WEEK 11

### Food, Migration, and Tourism

Meeting 1: *Food, Migration, and Ethnic Identity*

Meeting 2: *Food, Tourism and Cultural Change*

#### Readings for the week:

Di Giovine, M. 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), pp. 181–208.

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. M. (2004) ‘Foreword’ and ‘Introduction’, in Long, L. M. (ed.) *Culinary Tourism*, Lexington: Kentucky University Press, pp. xii-xiv/1-19.

## WEEK 12

### Anthropology of Drinking and Writing Workshop

Meeting 1: *Writing workshop*

Meeting 2: *The anthropology of drinking: The case of Italian natural wines*

#### Readings for the week:

Elisa Ascione, Jared Belsky, Mackenzie Nelsen & Manuel Barbato (2020) “Cultivating activism through terroir: an anthropology of sustainable winemakers in Umbria, Italy”, *Food, Culture & Society*, 23(3), pp. 277-295.

## WEEK 13

### Final Exams and Special Academic Events Week

TBA

#### Assignments:

Submission of the final ethnographic essay. See the full prompt in Moodle.