



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

Course Syllabus

Summer Semester I 2023

Instructor: Clelia Viecegli, PhD

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: none

Class Meeting Days & Time: Mondays and Wednesdays 9:15 am - 12:45 pm

Office Hours: Tuesdays 11:00 am - 12:00 pm or by appointment (First floor, FSE Office)

Email: cviecegli@umbra.org

Course Type: Standard Course

Course Fee: TBC

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;
- *recognize* the environmental, sociocultural, and economic factors that affect food supplies, food security, and health;
- *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;
- *carry out* that project while approaching cultural differences with an unbiased framework;

- *communicate* their research about various aspects of contemporary food systems using twenty-first century tools while practicing systematic, ethical, and public-facing scholarship.

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%
Biweekly Moodle Quizzes	20%
Midterm Exam	25%
Field Note Journal	20%
Final Exam	25%

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 one "sick day," 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.

Quizzes (20%)

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.

Midterm Exam (25%)

The midterm exam will cover all topics presented in the first half of the course and will consist of short-answer questions. The exam will take approximately 60 minutes to complete and is closed book/closed notes.

Field Note Journal (20%)

Field notes journal entries refer to the written account derived from data collected during ethnographic observations and interviews at different food venues and the farmers market in Perugia. Each entry should be typed with full sentences. 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.

Final Exam (25%)

The final exam is based upon the original data collected during the fieldwork activities and the readings done during the course. Student 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?

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 1 "sick day" (i.e. unexcused absences), which do not need to be justified. It is the student's responsibility to keep it in case of real necessity. i.e., sickness or any other unforeseen inconvenience that may prevent students from being in class. More than 1 absence will affect your final grade by 2% per absence. Excessive unexcused absences (4 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, unless there has been a specific academic accommodation.

I as an instructor and as a person am dependent on both my computer and my telephone. That said: An ever-increasing body of research shows that open laptops and telephones in the classroom create distraction (both visual and auditory) for those using them and those around them. You can type faster than you can write, and as a result you end up processing less when you're simply typing notes. For this reason, I have a physical notebook policy: I ask you to leave your computers in your bags and phones in your pockets and use a regular notebook. There are two exceptions: 1) if you have an accommodation related to your vision; 2) if you make an office hours appointment with me to discuss the use of a computer.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

Food: An Anthropological Perspective

Meeting 1: *Introduction to Anthropology of Food & Bio-Cultural Perspectives on Nutrition*

Readings for this meeting:

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

Co-curricular activity:

In-class tasting of typical food products from Umbria

Meeting 2: *Social and Religious Functions of Food*

Readings for this meeting:

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

Co-curricular activity:

Streaming of a documentary on sacred foods from Italy and gelato tasting at a local *gelateria*

WEEK 2

The Critique on Tradition & Ethnographic Research Methods

Meeting 1: *Food between Tradition and Innovation*

Readings for this meeting:

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.

Co-curricular activity:

Tasting of "traditional" Perugia's *torta al testo* from Testone

Meeting 2: *Qualitative and Ethnographic Research Methods*

Readings for this meeting:

Black, R. (2012) *Porta Palazzo: The Anthropology of an Italian Market*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. pp.1-7; 13-24; 65-70

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.

Co-curricular activity:

Ethnographic visit to the weekly market in Piazza Matteotti

WEEK 3

Heritage-Making & the Role of Gender in Food

Meeting 1: Food as Cultural Heritage

Readings for this meeting:

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>.

Co-curricular activity:

Dinner at Dal Mi Cocco restaurant

Meeting 2: Food and Gender

Readings for this meeting:

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

Assignments:

In-class midterm exam.

WEEK 4

Italian Street Food and Culinary Tourism

Meeting 1: Italian Street Food

Readings for this meeting:

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)..

Co-curricular activity:

Ethnographic visit to the porchetta stand Antica Salumeria Granieri

Meeting 2: Culinary Tourism

Readings for this meeting:

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](https://doi.org/10.1080/15528014.2021.1873037)

Co-curricular activity:

Ethnographic visit to the local Medieval fair (this activity will be held on Thursday evening)

WEEK 5

Food Activism: The Case-Study of Slow Food

Meeting 1: Food Activism

Readings for this meeting:

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

Co-curricular activity:

Dinner at the Slow Food restaurant Osteria a Priori

Meeting 2: The Slow Food Movement

Readings for this meeting:

Siniscalchi, V. (2014) 'Slow Food Activism between Politics and Economy', in Siniscalchi, V. and Counihan, C. (eds) *Food Activism: Agency, Democracy and Economy*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, pp. 225–242

Assignments:

In-class final exam.

List of suggested readings

Week 1

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.

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

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.

Week 2

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

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.

Week 3

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

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.

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

Week 4

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.

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 5

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.

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.