



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

Course Syllabus
Spring Semester 2022

Instructor: Clelia Vicelli, PhD

Credits: 3

Contact Hours: 45

Prerequisites: None

Class Hours:

Office Hours:

Email:

Course Type: Standard Course

Lab Fee:

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:

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Measures Course requirements that will be used to assess students' achievement for each learning outcome
<i>identify</i> 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
<i>recognize</i> the environmental, sociocultural, and economic factors that affect food supplies, food security, and health	Weekly Quiz
<i>design</i> 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	Participation Field notes Journal In-Class Presentation on “Food and Identity- A Personal Heritage”
<i>carry out</i> that project while approaching cultural differences with an unbiased framework	Final Ethnographic Essay
<i>communicate</i> their research about various aspects of contemporary food systems using twenty-first-century tools while practicing systematic, ethical, and public-facing scholarship.	In-Class Presentation on “Food and Identity- A Personal Heritage”

Course Materials

All reading materials will be made available in digital format on Moodle.

Please see “Umbra Institute Course Materials - Textbooks and Readers” handout provided in the orientation folder for more information.

Assessment

Participation	8%
Office Hours	2%
Weekly Quiz	10%
Recipe Presentation and Tasting	20%
Field notes journal 1	10%
Field notes journal 2	10%
Field notes journal 3	10%
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%	
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, a weekly quiz, a field notes journal, a recipe presentation and tasting, as well as a final essay.

Participation (8%)

For a spirited discussion, students' active attention and participation are required. Class participation grade is based on four 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.

Office Hours (2%)

Students are invited to come to office hours at least one time by Week 9. More info about office hours policy on Moodle course page.

Weekly Quizzes (10%)

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 of all attempts. 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 technical questions will help students learn the class' policies and administrative procedures. The methodological questions will test on skills that will pop up every week, like finding an author's argument and research methods used.

'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. The assignment consists of two parts: an oral component (10%) and a written component (10%). Students will find on Moodle a full prompt.

Field Note Journal (10% 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 to clelia.viecelligiannotti@gmail.com. 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 Ethnographic Essay (30%)

Title: "Food as Cultural Heritage in Three Perugian Food Venues" (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?

Students will find on Moodle a full prompt.

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 a 24-hour extension before the actual deadline. Each student is allowed one extension of 24 hours over the entire semester. Work submitted after the 24-hour extension will be marked zero.

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

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. For all students who display any relevant symptoms, the procedure will be the following:

1. avoid going to class;
2. immediately notify the Student Services staff;
3. be prepared to get tested for COVID at a local pharmacy within the day.

The following additional conditions apply:

- Students may attend classes remotely and without academic penalty via Zoom or Skype *but only* if they are waiting for the test to be scheduled or performed.
- Students with a positive test result (or who have been in close contact with someone who tested positive) must follow all applicable quarantine or isolation requirements and may attend classes remotely, *without academic penalty*.
- Students with a negative test result are allowed to attend class in person.

It is Institute policy that students with symptoms be tested. Any student refusing testing will not be admitted to the Institute under any circumstances and any absences will not be considered eligible for an extra absence for any classes missed. In other words, refusing a test and staying in one's apartment is considered an unexcused absence.

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).

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

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.

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 turned off before the beginning of each class. Computers and other electronic devices cannot be used during class lectures and discussions.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

WEEK 1

Food: An Anthropological Perspective

Day 1 *Introduction to Anthropology of Food*

Day 2 *Bio-Cultural Perspective on Nutrition*

Readings for the week:

Day 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.

Day 2: Fischler, C. (1988) 'Food, Self and identity', *Social Science Information*, n. 27, pp. 275-292.

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

WEEK 2

Ethnographic Research Methods

Day 1 *Qualitative research methods and ethnographic research*

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

Readings for the week:

Day 1: Fetterman, David M. (2010) *Ethnography: Step-by-Step*. 3rd ed. Applied Social Research Methods Series 17. Los Angeles: SAGE, pp. 20-26; pp. 33-53.

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

Day 2: Emerson, R. M. Fretz, R.I. Shaw, L. L., (2007) 'Participant Observation and Fieldnotes', in Atkinson, P. et al. (eds.) *Handbook of Ethnography*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications, pp. 371-387.

WEEK 3

Social and Religious Functions of Food

Day 1 *Social Functions of Food*

Day 2 *Food, Religion, and Taboos*

Readings for the week:

Day 1: 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.

Day 2: Harris, M. (1974) 'Mother Cow', in Harris, M. *Cows, Pigs, Wars, and Witches: The Riddles of Culture*. New York: Random House, pp. 11-32.

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

Food Globalization and Processes of Heritagization

Day 1 *Food and Globalization*

Day 2 *Food as Cultural Heritage*

Readings for the week:

- Day 1: 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.
- Day 2: 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>.
- Ascione, E. (2017) 'Food and Cultural Heritage: Preserving, Re-inventing and Exposing Food Cultures', in Naccarato, P. and LeBesco, K. (eds.) *The Handbook of Food and Popular Culture*, London, UK: Bloomsbury Publishers, pp 301-313.

WEEK 5

The Anthropology of Restaurants and Street Food

Day 1 *Food Artisans Ethnographic Fieldwork, Activity 2 (Chiosco Antica Salumeria Granieri)*

Day 2 *"Ethnographies of Where We Eat": The Anthropology of Restaurants*

Readings for the week:

- Day 1: Heyl, S. B. (2007) 'Ethnographic Interviewing', in Atkinson, P. et al (eds) *Handbook of Ethnography*, Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications, pp. 388-402.
- Day 2: 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.

WEEK 6

Alternative Food Movements and Food Activism

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

Day 2 *Slow Food and the Politics of "Virtuous Globalization"*

Readings for the week:

- Day 1: 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 and Plymouth: Altamira Press, pp. 13-29.
- Day 2: 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), pp. 133-144.

Browse www.slowfood.com

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

Semester Break

WEEK 7

Food and Gender

Day 1 *Restaurant Ethnographic Fieldwork, Activity 3 (Osteria A Priori)*

Day 2 *Food, Gender, and Family Life*

Readings for the week:

Day 1: 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.

Day 2: 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.
doi:[10.1177/0891243210383419](https://doi.org/10.1177/0891243210383419).

WEEK 8

Students' In-class Presentations

Day 1 'Food and Identity. A Personal Heritage' Recipe Presentation and Tasting (A-L)

Day 2 'Food and Identity. A Personal Heritage' Recipe Presentation and Tasting (M-Z)

Assignment: Hand in Field Notes Journal 3 (Osteria a Priori) divided in two sections: a) the class visit b) the independent fieldnotes.

WEEK 9

Food, Migration, and Tourism

Day 1 *Food, Migration, and Ethnic Identity*

Day 2 *Food, Tourism and Cultural Change*

Readings for the week:

Day 1: 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.

Day 2: 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 10

Note: All class meetings that would normally be held on Monday, April 18th, will take place on Friday, April 22nd. Please do not schedule any personal travel or other activities for this day as it will be counted as a regular class day.

Anthropology of Drinking and the Body

Day 1 *The Anthropology of Drinking: The case of natural wines*

Day 2 *The Anthropology of the Body*

Readings for the week:

Day 1: Black, R. E. (2013) '*Vino Naturale*: Tensions between Nature and Technology in the Glass', in Black, R. E. and Ulin, R. C. *Wine and Culture: Vineyard to Glass*, London and New York: Bloomsbury, pp. 279-294.

Day 2: 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.

WEEK 11

Special Academic Events Week

TBA