

Anthropology 365
Food and Culture
Online WORKING Syllabus



Summer 2018

Instructor: Christina W. O'Bryan

Office: Condon 274

Drop-in office hours: 2:30-4:00 Tuesdays & appointments in person, by phone or on Skype (or your favorite Skype-alternative—just give me a little time to learn it).

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Unless you are ailing or fasting, you eat every day. Is the food you eat a collection of biochemical substances that sustain your life? Or does eating have social, cultural and symbolic value? What, if anything, does it mean when you choose not to eat? Does it mean you are sick? Does it mean that you just aren't hungry in the moment? Or does not-eating also have social, cultural and symbolic value? What are the biological underpinnings of the relationships of human beings to their food? The food we eat serves more than the biological need to nourish. It is also a part of our cultural nourishment in social behaviors, relationships and ideas and culture is part of the unique array of adaptations we have as human beings.

This is a **biocultural** course in nutritional anthropology, which means that it examines issues relating to food from the perspectives of two subfields in our discipline—biological anthropology and cultural anthropology. We not only explore both biological and cultural aspects to food but how they interact. For example, consider the human gut, which appears to be like a second brain which mediates—among other things—immune function. So, what is the role of the food we choose in the health of the gut, i.e., what is the relation of culture to the biological action of the gut? Are there evolutionary considerations that may have influenced our adaptations in human digestion? How are processes of culture part of evolutionary biology in relation to food? What are the social and environmental consequences of how humans feed themselves?

These and other considerations are part of "Food and Culture" and this course fulfills a departmental requirement for anthropology majors which can be applied to satisfy a requirement for either a biological anthropological course or a cultural anthropological course.

This online summer version of the course is intended to provide you with the full 10-week course in a condensed period of time, so you will want to plan your workload accordingly.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

A primary goal of this university is to help you to develop critical thinking skills. The primary goal of this course is to support development of your critical thinking in regard to social, environmental, symbolic, and evolutionary aspects of human foodways. In this context, critical thinking is not only about being critical or taking arguments and assertions apart. It is about developing within your intellect tools to wonder expansively and explore with attention to contexts of arguments. I hope that you will become a more critical consumer not just of the food you eat but of the processes by which it becomes part of your nourishment as well as some of the meanings that are attached to how you nourish yourself and your friends and family. By the end of the course, you should have enough information to appreciate what anthropologists call different "Foodways." You will have tools to continue exploring in many directions the biological and cultural aspects of food and culture, but in particular, you will have tools to:

1. Decipher and deconstruct a meal nutritionally and culturally.
2. Explain the chain of circumstances, environments and people through which the food you eat had to pass before it could arrive in your mouth.
3. Explain the biocultural perspective as articulated in this course—in particular, the difference between bio anthro and cultural perspectives.
4. What are your goals and objectives for taking this course? (e.g., general education requirements, major field, food for life, _____, _____?)

ACCOMMODATIONS

If you have issues that affect how you function academically—e.g., if English is not your first language or if you have documented learning issues like learning disorders or disabilities that affect how you process the various tasks involved in this course, please let me know at the beginning of the term so that I can make appropriate adjustments. Be sure to document any learning issues with the Accessible Education office (<http://aec.uoregon.edu/>).

Some of the lectures and other materials for this term are primarily available through YouTube.

REQUIRED READINGS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Required textbooks and readings:

- *Nutritional Anthropology: Biocultural Perspectives on Food and Nutrition* by Darna Dufour, Alan Goodman and Gretchen Pelto. New York: Oxford University Press. 2012. **(NA)**
- Other readings will be posted on Canvas.

COURSE STRUCTURE

This course is organized around

- readings and lectures and assignments from the instructor and
- a mini-research project in which you will teach each other about something related to food and culture which interests you.
- The mini-project will include some ethnographic field work and will consist of 3 parts:
 1. a short, online presentation (3 to 5 minute video of your own narrated PowerPoint or other video format if you already know how to do it). Instructions will be provided if you don't know how to do this already and

there will be support for doing this through Dr. O'Bryan and the tech help desk (541-346-HELP). A sample video from another course will be provided in the Research Project module.

2. Peer feedback through the discussion board to an assigned group of your fellow students.
3. A final paper -- 1500-2000 words.

Guidelines for your research project are provided on the canvas website under Modules.

There is **no midterm and there is no final exam**. However, your project--the presentation, the feedback and the final paper--should all demonstrate your familiarity with all of the readings and lectures in the course.

GRADES

Breakdown of grading percentages

40% discussion board assignments and participation

60 % Research project:

1. (20 %) 3-5 minute **narrated online presentation** (instructions will be provided along with moral and at least some technical support)
2. (15 %) **peer feedback**
3. (25%) **final paper**

Some written work will be uploaded through Vericite, so if you have problems with it, please get help from the tech help desk in the Computing Center (541/346-4412). If you have questions about content or about assignments, contact Dr. O'Bryan or John O'Connor.

Grading Guidelines:

- A: Does the assignment exceptionally well—richer, deeper analysis and insightful discussion. Outstanding written work and participation. Shows a very high quality of understanding of course material.
- B: Does more than just the assignment and does it well. Very good written work and participation. Shows a high quality of understanding of course material.
- C: Does the assignment but nothing more. Acceptable written work and participation. Shows an understanding of course material.
- D: Does not really do the assignment. Poor written work. Shows minimal understanding of course material.
- F: Does not really do the assignment. Incomplete work and/or shows a lack of understanding of course material.

Final grades will be determined as follows:

97-100 = A+

87-89 = B+

77-79 = C+

60-69 = D

<60 = F

94-95 = A

84-86 = B

74-76 = C

90-93 = A-

80-83 = B-

70-73 = C-

COURSE PROTOCOLS

I want you to speak up in this class--through discussion boards, through emails to me, and in whatever ways we can find to interact. Passionate—always respectful--disagreement is an important part of learning in the classroom or in the virtual classroom, so we should work together to foster a class environment where excited inquiry, when it happens, can take place respectfully and even kindly. In other words, be polite, treat each other—and me—with respect and kindness when there is disagreement, even (maybe especially) if you are annoyed or angry. Feel free to bring up disagreements or questions with me; I will always endeavor to answer you well, though I can't always promise to give you the answer you want.

Plagiarism and Cheating Plagiarism is more than just copying someone else's work. It also includes copying someone else's idea without attribution and there are consequences to cheating by plagiarism or other means. If you are discovered to be plagiarizing or cheating, you will receive a zero for the assignments with potential additional consequences up to and including an 'F' for the course and being reported to the Office of the Dean of Students. For more information: <http://library.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students/index.html>.

Other basics:

- Bother me if you have questions and do so early rather than waiting. Summer sessions are very short and I want you to help you keep up if I can.
- Skimming is very helpful in a course like this—e.g., reading the abstract or introduction, the conclusion and the subheadings to get the main points. You can always go back and deepen your reading once you know where things are. You can also avoid the methodology discussions if they don't interest you.

~~~ BASIC SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS ~~~

**NOTE:** The course is organized around Modules in Canvas which will open up one module per day on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday for the first 2 ½ weeks. Each of these modules will contain lectures combined from YouTube video lectures by me and assortments of content from the Internet. Each module will contain lectures (a combination of YouTube video lectures by me and assortments of content from the web) and assignments. Readings, assignments and lecture time are each somewhat reduced from what would normally be a week of work in the 10 week term fall, winter and spring. The largest amount of reading comes in the first 2 weeks. In Week 3, there are only a few readings and in Week 4, there is no reading assigned.

\*\*\***PLAN AHEAD** for any special events and holidays. It's always okay to turn assignments in early.\*\*\*

Assignments come at the end each week.

## WEEK 1

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### Module 1. Biocultural perspective and commensalism/commensality

Readings

1. In **Nutritional Anthropology (NA): The Biocultural Perspective in Nutritional Anthropology**, Gretchen Pelto et. al.
2. Canvas: "Swapping Germs" and related material.
3. Canvas; Hooper, L. V. & J. L. Gordon. 2001. Commensal Host-Bacterial Relationships in the Gut. *Science* 292:1115-1118. Skim for the main ideas so you know where to find information.
4. Canvas: Rosenblum, J. D. 2015. Justifications for Foodways and the Study of Commensality. *Commensality: From Everyday Food to Feast* (S. Kerner, et. al. eds.) pp. 189-194. Bloomsbury Publishing. (Kindle Edition) Skim for the main ideas.
5. Explore the American Gut project and the Human Food Project website: <http://humanfoodproject.com/american-gut/>

**Browse** (so you know where to find nutritional information):

6. Recommended: In **NA**--Browse Appendix A and B
7. Recommended: Browse USDA nutrient tables USDA website <http://ndb.nal.usda.gov/>

### Module 2. Why Do We Eat What We Eat and What Does It Mean?

Readings:

1. In **NA**: No Heads, No Feet, No Monkeys, No Dogs: The Evolution of Personal Food Taboos, Miriam S. Chaiken
2. Norman Kretchmer, Genetic Variability and Lactose Tolerance **OR** Simoons, F. J. (1978). The geographic hypothesis and lactose malabsorption. *The American journal of digestive diseases*, 23(11), 963-980.
3. **On Canvas: Tapper, Nancy and Richard Tapper. 1985. Eat This, It'll Do You a Power of Good: Food and Commensality among Durrani Pashtuns. American Ethnologist.**



**Module 3.** Overview of evolution, adaptation and subsistence strategies.

Readings:

1. In **NA: Eaton, S. Boyd and Melvin Konner. Paleolithic Nutrition: A Consideration of Its Nature and Current Implications**
2. In **NA: Kung Nutritional Status and the Original "Affluent Society"--A New Analysis**, Barry Bogin
3. In **NA: Body Size, Adaptation and Function**, Reynaldo Martorelli

**Module 4.** Too much/too little: Food, hunger and the Environment

Readings:

1. In **NA: Child Malnutrition and Famine in the Nigerien Sahel**, Catherine Panter-Brick, Rachel Casiday, Katherine Hampshire, and Kate Kilpatrick.
2. On Canvas: **Want Amid Plenty: from Hunger to Inequality** Janet Poppendieck.
3. On Canvas: **Maxey, Larch. 2006. Can We Sustain Sustainable Agriculture? Learning from Small-Scale Producer-Suppliers in Canada and the UK.** *The Geographical Journal* 172(3):230-242.
4. On Canvas: **Vietnamese market gardens in NOLA**

**ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK 1 DISCUSSION DUE BY MIDNIGHT Sunday July 1:**

1. Analysis of week's readings/themes.
2. Project assignment.
3. Begin responding to at least 1 of your colleagues' discussion assignments.

**WEEK 2****Module 5.** Colonialism, globalization and the globalization of food and food production.

Readings:

1. **On Canvas: Mintz\_\_ Time, Sugar and Sweetness.**
2. In **NA: Coca-Colonization of Diets in The Yucatan**, Thomas L. Leatherman and Alan Goodman
3. In **NA: Diet and Delocalization: Dietary Changes Since 1750** Gretel H. Peltó and Pertti J. Peltó.

**Module 6.** Food and identities

Readings:

1. On Canvas: **Sobal, Jeffrey. 2005. Men, Meat and Marriage: Models of Masculinity.** *Food and Foodways* 13(1/2):1-26.
2. In **NA: Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus**, Anne Alison
3. **On Canvas: Stephen, Lynn. 2003. Cultural citizenship and farmworkers.** *Human Organization* 62(1):27-38.

**Module 7.** Political economies and food and agriculture.

Readings:

1. On Canvas: **Clapp\_The Political Economy of Food Aid in an Era of Agricultural Biotechnology.**
2. On Canvas: **the view from agribusiness—Harvard Business School Executive Seminars**
3. On Canvas: **Hightower excerpt**
4. **On Canvas: Dunn\_The Food of Sorrow**

5. On Canvas: The Sociopolitics of Food Deserts  
<http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/the-socio-economic-significance-of-food-deserts/>

**ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK 2 DISCUSSION DUE BY MIDNIGHT Sunday July 8:**

1. Readings analysis.
2. Project assignment.
3. Respond to at least one of your colleagues' entries for this week.

**WEEK 3**

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**Module 8.** Globalization

Readings:

1. In **NA**: How Sushi Went Global, Theodore C. Bestor.
2. In **NA**: Anthropological Perspectives on the Global Food Crisis, David A. Himmelgreen, Nancy Romero-Daza, and Charlotte A. Noble
3. **On Canvas: Nonini, Donald M. 2013. The local-food movement and the anthropology of global systems. *American Ethnologist* 40(2):265-275.**

**ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK 3 DISCUSSION DUE BY MIDNIGHT Sunday July 15:**

1. PRESENTATION.
2. Readings analysis.
3. (Optional) Comment on a colleague's reading analysis.

**WEEK 4**

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**Module 9:**

1. No reading assigned.
2. Watch colleagues' presentations,
3. Work on your final paper and
4. Submit peer evaluations.

**ASSIGNMENT FOR WEEK 4: Peer evaluations and Final Paper.**

1. **Peer evaluations DUE by midnight July 19 THURSDAY:** Peer feedback on presentations assigned to you. View presentations assigned to you and submit peer evaluations by clicking on Reply under the presentation
2. **Final Paper DUE by midnight July 22 Sunday:** Final Paper. Review your peer evaluations, make whatever revisions you deem appropriate to your final paper and submit it.

**HAVE A WONDERFUL SUMMER!**