



Chaplin School of  
Hospitality & Tourism  
Management

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

**HFT 3894**

**Global Food & Culture**

**Professor D'Alessandro**

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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

In Global Food & Culture we will determine how people use food to define themselves as individuals, groups or whole societies. We will identify the meaning and significance of food in different cultures by exploring the way the ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and religion influence global food choices or preferences. Additionally, we will examine how culture is conveyed and preserved through food. Through reading scholarly articles, book excerpts, newspapers articles, websites and cookbooks we will explore the intricate relationship that people have with food.

We will look critically at the following questions: How can food have different meanings for different people? How does food function both to foster community feeling and drive wedges among people? What are some prevailing academic theories that help us identify and understand more subtle meanings of food?

## COURSE METHODOLOGY

This course will primarily follow a seminar format in which discussions will take place based on course reading materials. Through small group discussions students will exchange ideas, develop hypothesis and arguments and present them to the class. Additionally, there will be two sessions that will provide an opportunity for practicum in a food laboratory. Students will be given the opportunity to express their opinions orally, in writing, verbally in class discussions and in practice in culinary laboratories.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Using a multidisciplinary platform, discuss global culture using food as a subject media
- Describe how food habits are influenced by religion, cultural systems and practices
- Identify global issues such as famine, hunger and food aid
- Present food as a catalyst for: art, craft, discussion, consumption, culture and aversion

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Expand & develop analytical vocabulary in cultural studies, developing analysis of global culture through oral and written modes of communication
- Expand & develop reading comprehension skills
- Examine everyday global phenomena from a variety of theoretical perspectives
- Develop basic technique in food preparation and ingredient identification
- Develop basic skills of sensory evaluation

**GLOBAL LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Global Awareness: Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge of the ways politics, economics, and cultures interact and influence the way food functions in communities across the globe.
- Global Perspective: Students will be able to analyze the underlying factors that influence the ways consumers and producers across the globe interpret the meaning of food.
- Global Engagement: Students will be able to describe their role in creating change concerning a global food issue.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

1. Belasco, W. J., & Scranton, P. (2002). *Food nations: selling taste in consumer societies*. New York: Routledge. (FN in outline)
2. Counihan, C., & Esterik, P. (2008). *Food and culture: a reader*. New York: Routledge. (F&C in outline)
3. Watson, J. L., & Caldwell, M. L. (2005). *The cultural politics of food and eating: a reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub. (CPFE in outline)
4. Additional required reading will be made available on Blackboard or will be available via FIU library.

**OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS**

Uniform: During laboratory exercises, student safety is paramount. As such, the proper attire must be worn as a protective measure. Our bookstore now sells all uniform requirements, less non-slip shoes (black only). In addition to the uniform, you are required to purchase a hat (\$10 from the lab manager), and are suggested to purchase two knives. The knives retail for \$20, and

will be required to be purchased in FSS 3230, but will be instrumental in our class. I highly recommend you purchase them or procure them on your own.

## COURSE OUTLINE

Week #1 – Introduction, course & syllabus overview

General thoughts on food & culture

Week #2 – Food as Theoretical

"The Culinary Triangle", Levi-Strauss, C. (F&C)

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"Food Matters: Perspectives on an Emerging Field", Belasco, W. (FN)

&

"Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption",  
Barthes, R. (F&C)

Week #3 – Food as Art

"Oral and Olfactory Art"

Harris, J. *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (Oct., 1979),  
pp. 5-15 (.pdf posted on Learn 9)

&

"Can Food Be Art? The Problem of Consumption"

Allhoff, F., & Monroe, D. (2007). *Food & philosophy: eat, drink, and be merry*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub. (.pdf posted on Learn 9)

Week #4 – Food and Political Economy

"Food and Counterculture: A Story of Bread and Politics", Belasco, W.  
(CPFE)

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"The Chain Never Stops", Schlosser, E. (F&C)

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"Fresh Demand: The Consumption of Chilean Produce in the United  
States", Goldfrank, W. (CPFE)

Week #5 – Food and Gender

"Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch Box as Ideological State  
Apparatus", Allison, A. (F&C)

&

"The Appetite as Voice", Brumberg, J. (F&C)

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"Conflict and Deference", Bynum C. (F&C)

**COURSE OUTLINE, continued**

## Week #6 – Food Voice

“My Little Town”

Lawson, A., & Deutsch, J. (2009). *Gastropolis: food and New York City*. New York: Columbia University Press. **(pdf posted on Learn 9)**

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Assignment: Bring in a food item that exemplifies your food voice. Write a one-page paper explaining why the item evokes emotion, memory, place, culture. You will present your food item to the class.

## Week #7 – Culinary Improvisation I

Practical exercise in food lab covering basic cooking skills and the application of one’s personal tastes, aesthetics and culture to these standards.

## Week #8 – Food and Nationalism: China, Mexico, Thailand

“China’s Big Mac Attack”, Watson, J. **(CPFE)**

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“Industrial *Tortillas* and Folkloric Pepsi: The Nutritional Consequences of Hybrid Cuisines in Mexico”, Pilcher, J. **(CPFE)**

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“Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism”, Heldke, L. **(F&C)**

Assignment: Turn in 10-page paper topic

## Week #9 – Food and Nationalism: Russia, Germany, India, Belize

“Domesticating the French Fry: McDonald’s and Consumerism in Moscow”, Caldwell, M. **(CPFE)**

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“Berlin in the *Belle Époque*: A Fast Food History”, Allen, K. **(FN)**

&

“How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India”, Appadurai, A. **(F&C)**

&

“Food and Nationalism: The Origins of Belizean Food”, Wilk, R. **(FN)**

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Topic of paper must be submitted in a printed format

Week #10 – Food and Nationalism: Canada, France, Italy

“Eddie Shack Was No Tim Horton”: Donuts and the Folklore of Mass Culture in Canada, Penfold, S. **(FN)**

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“Crafting Grand Cru Chocolates in Contemporary France”, Terrio, S. **(CPFE)**

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“How the French Learned to Eat Canned Food, 1809-1930s”, Brugel, M. **(FN)**

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“Slow Food and the Politics of Pork Fat: Italian Food and European Identity”, Leitch, A. **(F&C)**

Week #11 – Culinary Improvisation II

Playful Food! Student groups will select an emotion at random, and using the cultural constructs developed in class thus far, create a dish that provokes and demonstrates this emotion.

Week #12 – Food and Globalization

“How Sushi Went Global”, Bestor, T. **(CPFE)**

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“Coca-Cola: A Black Sweet Drink from Trinidad”, Miller, D. **(CPFE)**

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Assignment: 3 page rough draft of paper due

Week #13 – Food Avoidance and Aversion

Douglas, Mary, “Deciphering a Meal” **(F&C)**

&

Harris, Marvin, “The Abominable Pig” **(F&C)**

Week #14 – Student Presentations #1

Assignment: 10 page research paper due.

Week #15 – Student Presentations #2

## RESEARCH PAPER & PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

The culmination of this course in Global Food & Culture is a 10 page research paper with a subject that must be gleaned from the coursework, influenced by the Global Learning Objectives defined in the syllabus, and approved by the Professor. A 5-minute presentation will accompany the paper.

Some examples could be:

- \*Exploring a particular ethnic group's foodways
- \*Specific religious practices and food
- \*A cultural analysis of Jainism, Hinduism, etc. and their food customs
- \*Cultural identity through street food
- \*Gender roles in food across the globe
- \*Ethnography of a certain culture via participant observation

These topics are merely meant to give you an idea of the vast possibilities. Your topics must be submitted, in a printed, word-processed format on the 8<sup>th</sup> week of class. This will be followed by a rough-draft; submitted on the 12<sup>th</sup> week of class. Final paper submission will be on the 15<sup>th</sup> week of class.

A short, 5-minute presentation of your paper will occur in either our 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> class.

The paper should be double spaced, with 1 inch margins, and contain 10 pages of content, excluding the title page, table of contents, abstract, end notes or bibliography. A thesis statement needs to be clearly developed. The entire paper should focus around this thesis statement.

## ONE-PAGE REACTION PAPER

Bring in a food item that exemplifies your food voice. Write a one-page paper explaining why the item evokes emotion, memory, place, culture. You will present your food item to the class.

## GRADING

**Students will be evaluated on their practical as well as cognitive ability as follows:**

Participation & Attendance	30%	Attendance, in-class participation
Food Voice Example	10%	
One-Page Reaction Paper	10%	
Topic Submission	5%	
3-Page Rough Draft	5%	
Term Paper	30%	
Project Presentation	10%	