

Feeding California

DRAFT SYLLABUS

Online course – Anthropology 110Y
PE-H GenEd

Brian Walter
bwalter@ucsc.edu

Course Description

This course introduces students with no prior background in anthropology to the social practices, political processes, and cultural contexts that shape food production and consumption. By considering such diverse themes and topics as identity, heritage, choice, power, agency, body practices, belonging, access, safety, and security, students will learn key concepts, debates, theoretical approaches, and methodological orientations that are fundamental to the anthropology of food. The course will prioritize case studies of food practices in California, with comparative examples drawn from ethnographic studies of food around the world.

Course Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- 1) Understand key anthropological approaches to the study of food and human behavior
- 2) Develop theoretical frameworks for understanding key social issues such as identity, community formation, power and resistance, autonomy and choice, and moral economies
- 3) Show facility in methodological and ethical dimensions of anthropological approaches, most notably ethnographic fieldwork
- 4) Demonstrate knowledge about key issues in California cultural history
- 5) Understand the realities and debates of food insecurity
- 6) Demonstrate facility with technologically enhanced collaborative research, analysis, and presentation

Course Organization

The course is organized into 8 Units with individual modules for each unit. Each module will consist of a recorded video lecture that covers the materials, makes connections to reading and additional key texts, explains key concepts, and introduces questions for consideration. Reading assignments will accompany each unit and will be paired with brief quizzes to assess reading completion and comprehension. At the conclusion of the curated set of videos, students will participate in a short completion quiz to assure comprehension.

Students will participate in biweekly virtual discussion groups (weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10) facilitated by a TA. Discussion group exercises will include independent written work that will then be

posted to a shared discussion forum for group discussion. All materials will be posted and retained for future discussions and for instructors to review and evaluate.

Course Requirements

Assessment of your work for this course is varied and includes:

1) Ungraded monitoring of viewing of online course content

2) Comprehension quizzes at end of each session

There are 8 units in the course, each containing multiple lectures, readings, and other materials, and quizzes. Quizzes must be completed by the due dates. You may earn up to half credit if you complete the section within 7 days after it is due. Missing 2 sections will result in the total score going down a full letter grade.

3) Participation in biweekly discussion groups and contribution to online discussion boards

Discussion Sections will be held biweekly in weeks 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, with a final wrap-up discussion section in Week 10. Discussion Sections are mandatory, and you are expected to participate in class discussions and activities fully via video.

4) Completion of reading responses

5) Midterm Exam

6) Final Exam

Grading Scheme

Completion of Online Materials and Quizzes	15%
Participation in Biweekly Discussion Groups	20%
Completion of Reading Responses and Comments	15%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Exam	25%

Grading Scale

A	15 points
A-	14
B+	12
B	11
B-	10

C+	8
C	7
C-	6
D+	4
D	3
D-	2
F	0

Late Work and Extensions

Please see the syllabus and course Canvas site for specific details about assignment due dates. Late work will not be accepted and extensions will not be given. It is your responsibility to complete all work, including exams, by the scheduled due dates. Your participation in sections will depend on your completion of relevant lectures and readings in advance.

Office Hours and Communication with Instructors

The Professor and TA will be available for weekly office hours by Zoom. Requests to meet outside scheduled office hours will be accommodated as possible, but with a priority on meetings during regular business hours. No meetings will occur on weekends or on holidays. Emails should be directed through Canvas and will usually be returned within 3-4 business days. All correspondence must be accompanied with a subject line that indicates ANTH 110Y and the topic to be discussed.

Workload Expectations

The expectation within the University of California system is that for each credit hour of a course, students spend 3 hours in preparation during the week. For a 5 credit course spread over 10 weeks, this means that students should be spending about 15 hours per week preparing for class. An approximate distribution of the work time for this course each week is as follows: roughly 3 hours viewing online lectures, roughly 8 hours reading and reviewing course material, and 4 hours conducting research or writing for class assignments.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is a serious matter, and violations of the university's standards of academic integrity can result in serious penalties, including expulsion from the university. **I do not tolerate cheating, plagiarizing, or academic dishonesty.** Students who are caught cheating, plagiarizing, or engaging in other academically dishonest behavior in my classes receive an automatic F for the course, and will have the case submitted to their college Provost for additional sanctions. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the university's policy on Academic Integrity and to know what constitutes academic dishonesty. This information is available through your my.ucsc.edu portal, the registrar's site, your college, and the UCSC library. If you are joining the course from another UC campus or from outside the UC community, UCSC rules and expectations will apply, so please familiarize yourself with them. The TAs and I are happy to discuss academic integrity issues if you have questions.

Inclusion and Access

Your access to the materials and activities in this course is important. If you have a disability and require accommodations to achieve equal access, please submit an accommodation letter from your campus disability resource center to your instructor by email, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact information for campus disability resources and a link to instructions for requesting accommodations are provided on the course Canvas site.

Course Schedule

Unit 1: The Mythology of a California Food Culture

California is often presented as the garden or even the restaurant of the U.S., with California foods and food cultures circulated and desired throughout the country and the world. Yet coming up with an understanding of what constitutes “California” food culture is ambiguous and often highly contested in ways that reveal local, regional, national, and global political and economic interests. In this unit, we begin our exploration of “Feeding California” by thinking seriously about “culture,” and most notably what makes a unique culture like that of California. As the introduction to the course, this unit will use the topic of California Food Mythologies to orient students to the course, the readings, and the lectures and discussions that will follow, with particular focus on introducing students to the discipline of anthropology and the types of questions, theories, and methods that anthropologists use to study food topics.

Readings

Mary Douglas, 1997. “Deciphering a Meal,” In *Food and Culture: A Reader*, edited by Carole Counihan and Penny van Esterik, pp. 36-54, London: Routledge.

Anna Tsing, 2013, “More-than-Human Sociality: A Call for Critical Description,” *Anthropology and Nature* 27-42.

Jeffrey M. Pilcher, 2008, “Was the Taco Invented in Southern California?” *Gastronomica* 8(1): 26-38.

Jeffrey Charles, 2002, “Searching for Gold in Guacamole: California Growers Market the Avocado, 1910-1994,” In *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, ed. by Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton, Pp. 131-154., New York: Routledge.

Jessica Sewell, 2008, “Tea and Suffrage,” *Food, Culture & Society* 11(4): 487-507.

Unit 2: Food and Community Building

In studies of food, commensality is one of the most important issues that defines the significance of food throughout the world. This unit examines food’s commensal capacity by exploring the role that food plays in creating communities and a sense of belonging. What kinds of communities are formed, under what circumstances, and for what purposes? How does food transect, disrupt, or even break apart and reconstitute communities? We will learn about the

ways in which food is a form of sociality and solidarity and how anthropologists have explored this topic.

Readings

Melissa L. Caldwell 2002. "The Taste of Nationalism: Food Politics in Postsocialist Moscow," *Ethnos* 67(3): 295-319.

Michaela DeSoucey, 2010, "Gastronationalism: Food Traditions and Authenticity Politics in the European Union," *American Sociological Review* 75(3): 432-455.

Sylvia Ferrero, 2002, "Comida Sin Par. Consumption of Mexican Food in Los Angeles: 'Foodscapes' in a Transnational Consumer Society," In *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies*, ed. by Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton, Pp. 194-219, New York: Routledge.

Purnima Mankekar, 2002, "'India Shopping': Indian Grocery Stores and Transnational Configurations of Belonging," *Ethnos* 67(1): 75-98.

Kimberly Nettles-Barcelón, 2012, "California soul: Stories of Food and Place from Oakland's Brown Sugar Kitchen," *Boom: A Journal of California* 2(3): 18-24.

Unit 3: Gardens, Farms, and Agricultural Imaginaries

California is one of the world's most important agricultural regions, producing everything from staple fruits and vegetables to highly desired and expensive olive oils, wines, and cheeses. But what might California's agricultural culture tell us about the everyday lives of Californians? What are the cultural values that are rooted in California agriculture? This unit focuses on agricultural systems – gardening, farming, industrial agriculture – to think critically about the value of agriculture in California. We will consider such issues as the political and economic dimensions of farming and gardening, the mythology of nature and the rural, the ways in which values are created, and the cultural imaginaries that shape these values, and questions about who is allowed to participate or excluded in these experiences.

Readings

Laura J. Lawson, 2005, "Victory Gardens of World War II" (pp. 170-202), In *City Bountiful: A Century of Community Gardening in America*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2014, "Paradise Transplanted," *Boom: The Journal of California* 4(3): 86-94.

Marc Flacks, 2014, "New Missionaries: In the Olive Groves of the Golden State," *Boom: The Journal of California* 4(4): 54-63.

William H. Friedland, 2002, "Agriculture and Rurality: Beginning the 'Final Separation'?" *Rural Sociology* 67(3): 350-371.

Kyle Bladow, 2015, "Milking It: The Pastoral Imaginary of California's (Non)Dairy Farming," *Gastronomica* 15(3): 9-17.

Daniel Press, 2015, "Burned Wine and Bias," *Gastronomica* 15(4): 94-95.

Unit 4: Laboring Bodies

What is the work of food? Who produces that work, and how is that work experienced, valued, and defined? This unit uses food as a lens for understanding the nature of work, labor, and production. We will explore different forms of work and consider the different types of bodies (human, animal, mechanical, ideational) that produce food. What distinguishes work from other forms of labor, including leisure or voluntarism? How are rights and responsibilities configured in different forms of work? Do different types of bodies matter more or less than others? How are bodies and forms of work theorized in the anthropology of food.

Readings

Sarah Besky and Sandy Brown, 2015, "Looking for Work: Placing Labor in Food Studies," *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 12(1-2): 19-43.

Carolyn de la Peña, 2013, "Thinking through the Tomato Harvester," *Boom: A Journal of California* 3(1): 34-40.

David Bacon, 2017, "Who Harvests Our Food? The Indigenous Roots of a Migrant Farmworker – The Story of Gervasio Peña," *Gastronomica* 17(4).

Melissa L. Caldwell, 2011, "The Pleasure of Pain: Gardening for the Soul," *Dacha Idylls: Living Organically in Russia's Countryside*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

Julie Guthman, 2017, "Willing (White) Workers on Organic Farms? Reflections on Volunteer Farm Labor and the Politics of Precarity," *Gastronomica* 17(1): 15-19.

Seth M. Holmes, 2007, "Oaxacans Like to Work Bent Over: The Naturalization of Social Suffering among Berry Farm Workers," *International Migration* 45(3): 39-68.

Week 5: Midterm Exam

Unit 5: Food and Identity

How do foods and food practices reflect, express, and shape identity? Is it true that "you are what you eat"? Or is it that identity is the product of the food that a person picks, cooks, prepares, sells, or even rejects? Can identities change? Can people change identities? How does intersectionality work in the context of food-related identities? How are identities valued

differently in food practice, food justice, and studies of food? What is the significance of stereotypes and claims of authenticity, ownership, and appropriation? This unit will use food as a lens for understanding anthropological concepts of identity and identity politics. We will think through such aspects of identity as race, ethnicity, gender, class, age, and religion, among others, in order to consider the extent to which identities are biological, cultural, institutional, affiliational, experiential, or performative.

Readings

Alison Hope Alkon and Dena Vang, 2016, "The Stockton Farmers' Market: Racialization and Sustainable Food Systems," *Food, Culture & Society* 19(2): 389-411.

Ryanne Pilgeram, 2012, "Social Sustainability and the White, Nuclear Family: Constructions of Gender, Race, and Class at a Northwest Farmers' Market," *Race, Gender, & Class* 19(1/2): 37-60.

Emily Contois, 2017, 'Lose Like a Man': Gender and the Constraints of Self-Making in Weight Watchers Online," *Gastronomica* 17(1): 33-43.

Alexandra Rodney, Sarah Cappeliez, Merin Oleschuk, and Josée Johnston, 2017, "The Online Domestic Goddess: An Analysis of Food Blog Femininities," *Food, Culture & Society* 20(4): 685-707.

Jessica Weiss, 2001, "She Also Cooks: Gender, Domesticity, and Public Life in Oakland, California, 1957-1959," in *Kitchen Culture in America: Popular Representations of Food, Gender, and Race*, ed. by Sherrie A. Inness, pp. 211-226 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).

Perin Gurel, 2016, "Live and Active Cultures: Gender, Ethnicity, 'Greek' Yogurt in America," *Gastronomica* 16(4): 66-77.

Unit 6: Food, Choice, and Desire

In what ways do food practices reflect cultural practices of choice and desire? Are food systems coercive and constraining, or can consumers make choices about the foods they like and dislike and how they use those foods? Why are issues of choice so fraught in discussions about healthy eating, food access, and even cultural tradition? This unit examines issues of choice and desire in order to understand anthropological questions with agency, power, and constraint. We will explore how issues of choice and agency are theorized, performed, contested, and redefined. Is choice an expression of freedom and autonomy; can choice be a product of coercion and oppression; is there space for resistance and subversion?

Readings

Alison Hope Alkon, 2007, "Growing Resistance: Food, Culture and the Mo' Better Foods Farmers' Market," *Gastronomica* 7(3): 93-99.

Carolyn Thomas, Jennifer Sedell, Charlotte Biltekoff, and Sara Schaefer, "Abundance, Control and Water! Water! Water!: The Work of Eating at Work," *Food, Culture & Society* 19(2): 251-271.

Charlotte Biltekoff, 2016, "The Politics of Food Anti-Politics," *Gastronomica* 16(4): 44-57.

Sandra Cate, 2008 "'Breaking Bread with a Spread' in a San Francisco County Jail," *Gastronomica* 8(3): 17-24.

Megan A. Carney, 2013, "Border Meals: Detention Center Feeding Practices, Migrant Subjectivity, and Questions on Trauma," *Gastronomica* 13(4): 32-46.

Unit 7: Food Access, Safety, and Security

Issues of access have emerged as a critical reality for many people throughout the world, yet how access is defined, experienced, and addressed reveals much about the political and economic systems that shape food cultures. At different moments, access may be to safe food, nutritional food, traditional food, or simply to sufficient food. This unit will examine concerns with food safety, security, and access in order to illuminate how political, moral, and economic ideologies inform how people do or do not consume food and whether food is truly a basic human necessity or even a human right. How are concepts such as food (in)security, safety, and access defined by ordinary people, activists, or policy makers? What types of structures and institutions enable particular ideologies and practices of food relief to take shape? How are ideas of deservingness, responsibility, and gratitude embedded in food security initiatives? What are the power structures that shape food security projects, and are these helpful, empowering, constraining, or even coercive? How are other other perceived social problems (poverty, homelessness, violence, citizenship status, etc.) entangled within food relief?

Readings

Patricia Allen, 2007, "The Disappearance of Hunger," *Gastronomica* 7(3): 19-23.

Laura-Anne Minkoff-Zern and Megan A. Carney, 2015, "Latino Im/migrants, "Dietary Health," and Social Exclusion, *Food, Culture & Society* 18(3): 463-480.

Paul Farmer, 2004, *Pathologies of Power: Health, Human Rights, and the New War on the Poor*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

** Read Ch. 1 (pp. 29-50) and Ch. 5 (pp. 139-159)

Janet Poppendieck, 2010, *Free For All: Fixing School Food in America*, Berkeley: University of California Press.

** Read Introduction (pp. 1-25), Ch. 1 (pp. 26-45), Ch. 2 (pp. 46-83), Ch. 6 (pp. 161-189), Ch. 7 (pp. 190-221)

Lyna Fujiwara, 2005, "Mothers Without Citizenship: Asian Immigrant and Refugees Negotiating Poverty and Hunger in Post-Welfare Reform," *Race, Gender & Class* 12(2): 121-141.

Alex V. Barnard 2011, "'Waving the Banana at Capitalism': Political Theater and Social Movement Strategy among New York's 'Freegan' Dumpster Divers," *Ethnography* 12(4): 419-444.

Nancy N. Chen "Between Abundance and Insecurity: Securing Food and Medicine in an Age of Chinese Biotechnology" in *Bioinsecurity and Vulnerability*, School of American Research Press, 2014.

Unit 8: Food and the Moral Economy

Food's nutritional and social capacities are perhaps exceeded only by its ability to symbolize and channel moral issues. As such, food is a powerful symbol and conduit for critical debates about morals, ethics, and political ideologies more broadly. This unit examines the moral economies of food. How does food become caught up in debates about right and wrong, goodness, and even justice? What makes food a particularly malleable and powerful object for moral issues? What types of social justice movements have emerged around food? What utopian dreams are embedded within food moralities?

Readings

John Crossan et al, 2016, "Contesting Neoliberal Urbanism in Glasgow's Community Gardens: The Practice of DIY Citizenship," *Antipode* 48(4): 937-955.

Alexandra Sexton, 2016, "Alternative Proteins and the (Non)Stuff of 'Meat,'" *Gastronomica* 16(3): 66-78.

FINAL EXAM