

**ANT 316.01 FOOD AND CULTURE**  
**Fall 2007**

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**Thought for Food**

*Tell me what you eat and I will tell you what you are.* Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826)

*There is no love sincerer than the love of food.* George Bernard Shaw

*Part of the secret of success in life is to eat what you like and let the food fight it out inside.*  
Mark Twain

*The meat is white and tastes like chicken.* Christopher Columbus, after eating an iguana in the Bahamas.

*Chi mangia bene sta molto vicino a Dio* (Who eats well stays close to God)—Italian saying

*Anthropology 316 is neither a cooking course nor a piece of cake.* Margaret Blackman  
(For what it really is, see below).

**FOOD** is the very core of life, meeting our most basic human need. Food is also one of the most culturally elaborated areas of human experience. Our cultural and ethnic identities are closely tied to food. Life's important rituals and religious celebrations include the preparation, serving and sharing of food (and/or abstaining from food). Food is about gender, about class, about politics. Food is about aesthetics, about friendship, about community. Food is also about contemporary issues, many of them global—food policies, sustainable agriculture, the genetic modification of foodstuffs, environmental degradation, the safety of our food, obesity and hunger and nutritional diseases, to name a few. In ANT 316 we will explore the culture of food with an emphasis on contemporary food-related issues and critical reflection on our own individual and cultural foodways.

*This course fulfills the following General Education requirements: Contemporary Issues, Perspectives on Women*

**OBJECTIVES**

- Master course knowledge/content on the relationships between culture and contemporary food systems
- Explain and give examples of the myriad approaches to the study of food
- Identify and explain salient contemporary issues related to food
- Apply critical thinking skills in the exploration of one's own foodways
- Write effectively, clearly, critically and persuasively

- Eat more knowledgeably and wisely!

## REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

50% of grade—3 Exams, and an optional final = (10/2, 11/1, 11/27)

30% of grade—4 Essays on food and food issues covered in class (9/20, 10/11, 11/13, 11/29)

20% of grade—Class participation, leading class discussion, and Attendance

## READINGS

Steve Striffler

*Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food* (2005)  
Yale University Press

Michael Ruhlman

*The Soul of a Chef: The Journey Towards Perfection.*(2000). Penguin Books

A selection of articles and book chapters online, accessible through ANGEL.

## ANGEL (class website)

“ANGEL” is the college’s online course management website. To access it, go to Brockport’s home page ([www.brockport.edu](http://www.brockport.edu)), click on online services, then click on ANGEL. You use your Brockport login and password to access all of the courses in which you are currently enrolled.

On the ANT 316 ANGEL site you will find class handouts, websites related to food and culture, and the syllabus. Here it is easy to send e-mails to classmates or to me. You can also keep track of your recorded grades on assignments and check your course grade at the end of the semester.

There are a number of readings, listed by week assigned on the course outline, available through ANGEL and in the folder, “Course Reserves.” You can either read them online or print them out.

## POLICIES

- Readings and Discussion: You are expected to be prepared each week (mostly Thursdays and two Tuesdays) to discuss in class the readings assigned for each week.
- Attendance: Class attendance is expected. If you miss more than three classes your course participation grade will be lowered. If you miss more than 15% of the course (5 classes) your course grade will be lowered, and, at the instructor's discretion you are subject to failure of the course.
- Electronic devices: Please turn off cell phones, pagers, and other communications devices before class begins. You may use a laptop computer for note-taking during class, but not unrelated activities (e-mail, web browsing). Students caught indulging in unrelated activities will be disallowed from using a laptop in class for the remainder of the term.

- **Grading:** see Anthropology Departmental Guidelines for Student Evaluation (posted on the ANGEL site). Policies on incompletes, withdrawals, and academic dishonesty are listed in the college's handbook, *Your Right to Know & Academic Policies Handbook*, available online at <http://www.brockport.edu/publications/>. Please familiarize yourself with them.
- **Exams:** The final exam is optional (unless you have missed an exam). The final exam counts ONLY if you get a higher grade than that on any of the other exams. Your final exam grade can replace any or all of your other exam grades.

*No Make-up Exams will be given. If you miss an exam you must take the final.*

### **Disability statement**

Students with documented disabilities may be entitled to specific accommodations. Brockport's Office for Students with Disabilities makes this determination. Please contact the Office for Students with Disabilities at 395-5409 or [osdoffic@brockport.edu](mailto:osdoffic@brockport.edu) to inquire about obtaining an official letter to the course instructor detailing approved accommodations. You are responsible for providing the course instructor with an official letter. Faculty work as a team with the Office for Students with Disabilities to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

**Aug 28-30** FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Food as history, biography, memoir, politics, & culture

#### READINGS

John McPhee: "Oranges"

Austin Clarke: "Introduction" to *Pigtails 'n Breadfruit: A Culinary Memoir*

VIDEO: "Milk"

**Sept 4-6** FOOD FOR THOUGHT, CONT.

#### READINGS

Marion Nestle: "Introduction" to *Food Politics*

VIDEO: "Food 360 Degrees"

**Sept 11-13** FOOD IS MORE THAN FOOD: "Strange" foods, last meals, and special diets

#### READINGS

Blackman "Birds—Not of a Feather"

Brumberg and Striegel-Moore "Continuity and Change in Symptom Choice: Anorexia"

VIDEO: "Bread"

**Sept 18-20** FOODWAYS: THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF IT (Inuit and Pacific Islanders)

#### READINGS

Blackman "Of Meat and Hunger and Everlasting Gobstoppers"

Shell “New World Syndrome”

VIDEO: “Food and Intimacy”

*Sept 20<sup>th</sup> –first writing assignment due*

**Sept 25-27 FOODWAYS: ITALY, ITALIAN AMERICANS, AND THE IMPACT OF IMMIGRATION ON THE AMERICAN DIET**

READINGS

D’Aluisio: “Dinner is Served”

Menzel and D’Aluisio: “Italy: Fish Tales”

Levenstein, “The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930”

VIDEO: “Pasta”

**Oct 2- 4 FOODWAYS: JAPAN**

EXAM 1—October 2<sup>nd</sup> (all lectures, videos, readings through September 27<sup>th</sup>)

READINGS

Menzel and D’Aluisio: “Japan: Vitamin Sea”

Allison “Japanese Mothers and *Obentos*”

**Oct 9-11 AMERICA: THE SUPERMARKET IS WHERE WE LEARN TO FORGET (Industrialized Agriculture)**

READINGS

Striffler: *Chicken*, pp. Preface-31

*October 11—second writing assignment due*

**Oct 16-18 (no class Oct 16<sup>th</sup> -enjoy fall break): CORN, CORN AND MORE CORN (Farm subsidies, GM crops, cheap food, and how these affect our diet)**

READINGS

Striffler: *Chicken*, pp. 32-71

**Oct 25-27 Instructor will be at a conference; Two videos will be shown**

READINGS

Striffler: *Chicken*, pp. 73-110

Pollan: “Power Steer”

VIDEOS: “Fat”; “Modern Meat”

**Oct 30-Nov 1 WHERE DOES IT COME FROM AND WHAT’S IN IT (Food labeling, food security, food industry workers and the globalization of our diets)**

EXAM 2—Nov 1<sup>st</sup> (all lectures, videos, readings through October 30<sup>th</sup>)

READINGS

Striffler: *Chicken*, pp. 110-end [this was put on Exam 3]

**Nov 6-8 ORGANIC FOOD, LOCAVORES, FARM MARKETS, AND COMMUNITY SUPPORTED AGRICULTURE**

READINGS

Nestle: “The Produce Section”

VIDEO: “To Market, To Market” (Rochester, NY Public market)

**Nov 13-15 FOOD, RELIGION AND RITUAL (Thanksgiving, the American Eating Holiday)**

READINGS

Siskind: “The Invention of Thanksgiving”

VIDEO: “What’s Cooking”

*November 13<sup>th</sup>—third writing assignment due*

**Nov 20-22 (no class Nov 22<sup>rd</sup> —Happy Thanksgiving!) FAMINE BEFORE FEAST: The issue of hunger**

READINGS

Lappé and Lappé: “Pushing the Edge of Hope”

Menzel and D’Aluisio: “Chad—Refuge”

VIDEO: “Myths and Taboos”

**Nov 27-29 FOOD AS ART, PLEASURE, AND ENTERTAINMENT**

EXAM 3—Nov 27<sup>th</sup> (all lectures, videos, readings through Nov 20<sup>th</sup>)

READINGS

Ruhlman, *The Soul of the Chef*, PP. 1-115

*November 29<sup>th</sup> —4<sup>th</sup> writing assignment due*

**Dec 4-6 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS**

Your Just Desserts—eating day, December 6<sup>th</sup>. Bring a dish to pass.

READINGS

Ruhlman, *The Soul of the Chef*, PP. 215-319

**Final Exam week**—Optional Final Exam (cumulative)