

Culture and Nutrition (Class #2531618)
Anthropology, ANT4930/ANG5531
Spring 2025

Dr. Susan D. deFrance
1350-B Turlington Hall
Office hours: Tuesday 11:30 - 12:30 pm
Thursday 2:00 - 4:00 pm and by appt

CULTURE AND NUTRITION

Course Objectives and Structure

The goal of this class is to gain an understanding of the biological and cultural basis of human diet and food habits. Geographic variability in food habits and diet across the globe are the result of unique forces of biology, environment, history, and culture in the development of nutritional patterns. In addition, food and the rules regarding its consumption are among the strongest symbolic elements of culture. Therefore, the integration of both biology and culture is foremost in nutritional anthropological studies.

We examine a broad range of literature from anthropological theory, biological anthropology, archaeology, historical anthropology, and modern field studies to understand the evolution of the human diet, human diet through ancient and modern times, the collection of nutritional data, and modern challenges to the study of culture and nutrition.

The course is structured as a graduate seminar in which weekly participation and discussion are critical. I will present a brief overview of the week's topic followed by student presentations and discussion.

Required Readings

pdf files of all readings will be on the E-Learning Canvas web site
Mintz, Sidney (any edition) *Sweetness and Power*. Penguin Books, New York.

Class Requirements

Attendance and Participation	20%
Weekly written assessments	40
Annotated Bibliography	20
Critical Paper	20

Details on class requirements:

Attendance and Discussion Participation (Excused absences require documentation)	20 %
Each week there will be ~5 required readings for all to discuss You must prepare a written assessment (not a summary) of the week's readings (1+ page single-spaced for the week's readings)	40
Please upload written assessments to Canvas prior to the start of class Individuals will rotate presenting the readings in detail and pose discussion questions.	
Annotated bibliography on topic (same as critical paper) (due 4/22)	20
Graduate students: 25 sources, 100 words each; Undergrad: 15 sources, 100 words each)	
Critical Paper on a Culture and Nutrition topic (4/29) (Graduate students: @10 pages) (Undergraduates: 5 pages)	20

Culture and Nutrition Weekly Topics

Jan. 14	Introduction, class structure
Jan. 21	Cuisine versus Nutrition
Jan. 28	Bodies: Ancestors, Primates, Humans
Feb. 4	Bodies: Too Little, Too Much, and the Unseen
Feb. 11	Fire, Cooking, Meals
Feb. 18	Plants
Feb. 25	Animals
March 4	Aversions
March 11	Labor
March 18	Spring Break
March 25	Drink
April 1	Celebrations
April 8	Identity
April 15	Insecurity
April 22	Waste and Global Worlds Annotated bibliography due

Exam week - April 29 Final Critical Paper due

Jan. 14 Introduction, class structure

Farb, Peter and George Armelagos
1980 *Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Prologue and Epilogue

Mintz, Sidney W. and Christine M. Du Bois
2002 The Anthropology of Food and Eating. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31:99-119.

Jan. 21 Cuisine versus Nutrition

Dufour, D.L. and Piperata, B.A.

2023 Nutritional Anthropology. In *A Companion to Biological Anthropology*, C.S. Larsen (Ed.). <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119828075.ch15>

Treitel, Corinna
2020 Nutritional Modernity: The German Case. *Osiris* 35:183–203

Tierney, R.K. and Ohnuki-Tierney, E.,
2012 Anthropology of food. *The Oxford handbook of food history*, pp.117-406.
https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Oxford_Handbook_of_Food_History/KDNpAgAAQBAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1&dq=anthropology%20of%20diet&pg=PA118&printsec=frontcover

Messer, Ellen
1984 Anthropological Perspectives on Diet. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 13: 205-249.

Graff, Sarah R.
2020 Archaeology of Cuisine and Cooking. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 2020 49:1

Gavin MC et al.
2018 The Global Geography of Human Subsistence. *R. Soc. open sci.* 5: 171897.

Jan. 28 Bodies: Ancestors

Farb, Peter and George Armelagos
1980 *Consuming Passions: The Anthropology of Eating*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1980.
Chapter 1 The Biological Baseline, pp. 19-46.

Krebs, John R.
2009 Gourmet Ape: Evolution and Human Food Preferences. *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 2009, Vol.90 (3S), p.707S-711S

Meigs, Anna

1997 Food as a Cultural Construction. pp. 95-106 In *Food and Culture: A Reader*, C. Counihan and P.V. Esterik, eds., Routledge.

Levi-Strauss, Claude

1997 The Culinary Triangle. In *Food and Culture: A Reader*, C. Counihan and P.V. Esterik, eds. pp. 28-35. Routledge, New York.

Nahum-Claudel, Chloe

2020 Pyrotechnical Mastery and Humanization Amazonian Cuisine, Care, and Craft in Evolutionary and Semiotic Perspective. *Current Anthropology* 61(4):418-440.

Feb. 18 Plants

Arranz-Otaegui A, Gonzalez Carretero L, Ramsey MN, Fuller DQ, Richter T.

2018 Archaeobotanical evidence reveals the origins of bread 14,400 years ago in northeastern Jordan. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A.* 115(31):7925-7930.

Champion, Louis and Dorian Q. Fuller

2018 Archaeobotany: Methods. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History. DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190277734.013.204

Piperno, Dolores R.

2011 The Origins of Plant Cultivation and Domestication in the New World Tropics: Patterns, Process, and New Developments. *Current Anthropology* 52:S453-S470.

Johns, Timothy

1999 The Chemical Ecology of Human Ingestive Behaviors. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 28:27-50.

de Medeiros, P.M., dos Santos, G.M.C., Barbosa, D.M. *et al.*

2021 Local Knowledge as a Tool for Prospecting Wild Food Plants: Experiences in Northeastern Brazil. *Sci Rep* **11**, 594.

Kimmerer, R.

2013 The Three Sisters. In *Braiding Sweetgrass : Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants*. Milkweed Editions. Created from ufl on 2023-01-03 16:35:09.

Feb. 25 Animals

<https://www.nature.com/scitable/knowledge/library/evidence-for-meat-eating-by-early-humans-103874273/>

McCormick, F.

2002 The Distribution of Meat in a Hierarchical Society: The Irish Evidence. In Miracle, P., and Milner, N. (eds.), *Consuming Passions and Patterns of Consumption*, McDonald Institute of Archaeology, Monographs, Cambridge, pp. 25-31.

Nadasdy, Paul

2008 The Gift in the Animal: The Ontology of Hunting and Human–Animal Sociality. *American Ethnologist* 34(1):25 - 43

Blanchette, Alex

2018 Industrial Meat Production. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 47:185-199.

Bennett C.E. et al.

2018 The Broiler Chicken as a Signal of a Human Reconfigured Biosphere. *R. Soc. open sci.* 5: 180325.

March 4

Aversions

Douglas, Mary. Introduction *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Taylor & Francis.

Harris, Marvin

1985 *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture*. Simon and Schuster, New York.
Chapter 4 and 5 The Abominable Pig and Hippophagy, pp. 67-108.

Rozin, Paul

1987 Psychobiological Perspectives on Food Preferences and Avoidance, chap. 8 in *Food and Evolution: Toward a Theory of Human Food Habits*, M. Harris and E. B. Ross, eds, pp. 181-206. Temple University Press.

Rozin, P., & Fallon, A. E.

1987 A Perspective on Disgust. *Psychological Review*, 94(1), 23–41.

Sahlins, Marshall

1983 Raw Women, Cooked Men, and Other “Great Things” of the Fiji Islands in *The Ethnography of Cannibalism*, P. Brown and D. Tuzin eds., pp. 72-93. Society for Psychological Anthropology.

Supplementary:

Simoons, Frederick J.

1961 *Eat Not This Flesh: Food Avoidances in the Old World*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison. Chapters 1 and 9 Conclusions, pp. 3-12 and 106-125

March 11 Labor

Mintz, Sidney W. (REQUIRED TEXT)
1987 (1985) *Sweetness and Power*. Penguin Books.

Richards, Audrey
1939 *Land, Labour, and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: An Economic Study of the Bemba Tribe*. Oxford University Press, London.
Intro, Chapters 2 and 3

March 18 Spring Break

March 25 Drink

Mandelbaum, David G.
1965 Alcohol and Culture. *Current Anthropology*, 6(3):281-293.

Dietler, Michael
2020 Alcohol as Embodied Material Culture. In: *Alcohol and Humans*. Edited by: Kimberley J. Hockings and Robin Dunbar, Oxford University Press Oxford U. Press.

Daly, Lewis
2020 *The Nature of Sweetness: An Indigenous Fermentation Complex in Amazonian Guyana*. In: *Alcohol and Humans*. Edited by: Kimberley J. Hockings and Robin Dunbar, Oxford University Press.

Rosinger, Asher Y and Hilary J. Bethancourt,
2020 Chicha as Water In: *Alcohol and Humans*. Edited by: Kimberley J. Hockings and Robin Dunbar, Oxford University Press.

Roseberry, William
2005 The Rise of Yuppie Coffees and the Reimagination of Class in the United States. In *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*, James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell, eds., pp. 122-143. Blackwell Publishing.

April 1 Celebrations

Fischler, C.
2011 Commensality, Society, and Culture. *Social Science Information* 50(3-4): 528–548.

Smith, Monica
2015 Feasts and Their Failure. *Journal of Archaeological Method Theory* 22:1215–1237.

Bray, T. L.

2012 Ritual Commensality between Human and Non-Human Persons: Investigating Native Ontologies in the Late Pre-Columbian Andean World in Susan Pollock (ed.), *Between Feasts and Daily Meals: Toward an Archaeology of Commensal Space*. *Journal for Ancient Studies Special Volume 2* (2012), pp. 197–212.

Van der veen, M.

2003 When is Food a Luxury? *World Archaeology* 34(3):405-427.

Jones O'Day, Sharyn

2004 Past and Present Perspectives on Secular Ritual: Food and the Fisherwomen of the Lau Islands, Fiji, pp. 153-161. Proceedings of the 9th ICAZ Conference, *Behavior Behind Bones: The Zooarchaeology Ritual, Religion, Status, and Identity*, edited by S. Jones O'Day, W. Van Neer, and A. Ervynck. Oxbow Books, UK

April 8 Identity

Ervynck, A.

2004 *Orant, Pugnans, Laborans*. The Diet of the Three Orders in the Feudal Society of Medieval North-Western Europe. In Jones O'Day, S., van Neer, S. W., and Ervynck, A. (eds.), *Behaviour Behind Bones: The Zooarchaeology of Ritual, Religion, Status, and Identity*. Oxbow Books, Oxford, pp. 215-223.

Appadurai, A.

1981 Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia. *American Ethnologist* 8:494-511.

deFrance, Susan

2006 The Sixth Toe: The Modern Culinary Role of the Guinea Pig in Southern Peru. *Food and Foodways*.

Yamin-Pasternak, Andrew Kliskey, Lilian Alessa, Igor Pasternak, and Peter Schweitzer,

2014 The Rotten Renaissance in the Bering Strait: Loving, Loathing, and Washing the Smell of Foods with a (Re)acquired Taste *Current Anthropology* 55:5, 619-646. (read all the comments)

Jones, Naya. 2019. "Dying to Eat? Black Food Geographies of Slow Violence and Resilience". *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies* 18 (5), 1076-99.

<https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/1683>.

Sobo, Elisa J.

1997 The Sweetness of Fat: Health, Procreation, and Sociability in Rural Jamaica. In *Food and Culture: A Reader*, C. Counihan and P.V. Esterik, eds. pp. 256-271., Routledge.

April 15

Insecurity

Hadley, Craig and Deborah L. Crooks

2012 Coping and the Biosocial Consequences of Food Insecurity in the 21st Century. *Yearbook of Physical Anthropology* 55:72–94.

Piperata, B. A., Scaggs, S. A., Dufour, D. L., & Adams, I. K.

2022 Measuring Food Insecurity: An Introduction to Tools for Human Biologists and Ecologists. *American Journal of Human Biology*, e23821.

Moffat, Tina, Charlene Mohammed, K. Bruce Newbold

2017 Cultural Dimensions of Food Insecurity among Immigrants and Refugees *Human Organization* 76(1):15-27.

Wutich, Amber and Alexandra Brewis

2014 Food, Water, and Scarcity: Toward a Broader Anthropology of Resource Insecurity. *Current Anthropology* 55(4): 444-468.

Brück, Tilman and Marco d'Errico

2019 Food Security and Violent Conflict: Introduction to the Special Issue *World Development*, 119:145-149

Green, Amanda. 2019. Food for Thought. *Anthropology News* website, March 13, 2019.

DOI: 10.1111/AN.11116 read online - <https://www.anthropology-news.org/articles/food-for-thought/>

April 22

Waste; Global Worlds; Cultural Appropriation

Annotated bibliography due

Evans, D., Campbell, H. and Murcott, A.

2012 A Brief Pre-History of Food Waste and the Social Sciences. *Sociol Review* 60:5-26.

Parfitt Julian, Barthel Mark and Macnaughton Sarah

2010 Food Waste Within Food Supply Chains: Quantification and Potential for Change to 2050. *Phil. Trans. R. Soc. B* 365:3065–3081

Russo, Federico

2022 There's No Waste in Boma. *Anthropology News* website, August 10, 2022.

<https://www.anthropology-news.org/articles/theres-no-waste-in-boma/>

Doherty, Jacob

2019 Filthy Flourishing: Para-Sites, Animal Infrastructure, and the Waste Frontier in Kampala. *Current Anthropology* 2019 60:S20, S321-S332.

<https://www.sv.uio.no/sai/english/research/projects/overheating/news/2017/waste-workshop.html>

Cultural appropriation: Why is food such a sensitive subject?

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-47892747>

[https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists?term\[\]=vocabulary_thesaurus-10](https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists?term[]=vocabulary_thesaurus-10)

Bortolotto, Chiara and Benedetta Ubertazzi

2019 Editorial: Foodways as Intangible Cultural Heritage. *International Journal of Cultural Property* 25:409–418.

Matta, Raúl

2016 Food Incursions into Global Heritage: Peruvian Cuisine's Slippery Road to UNESCO
Social Anthropology 24(3):338–352

April 29 Final Critical Paper due