



# **Anthropology 332: Culture and Nutrition**

**Oxford College, Spring 2019**

**Tuesday and Thursday 10:00-11:15, Pierce 237**

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## **Course Description**

We know that we “Eat to Live.” Embedded in the foods we eat are micro and macro nutrients that enable us to meet our optimal levels of growth and performance.

But what does it mean to “Live to Eat?”

Furthermore, what do we mean when we say “You Are What You Eat?”

These adages speak to the inherently cultural side of nutrition and the queries of this class. Instead of delving into the mechanics of nutrition we will contemplate the complex and intersecting social processes (political, economic, cultural) that shape contemporary human populations into diverse eaters with disparate rates of nutritional outcomes.

## **How We Will Learn and Our Goals**

This class is organized as a seminar. That means I will not be the “Sage on the Stage” but rather the “Guide on the Side.” We are not seeking to accumulate and absorb content. Rather will be entangling ourselves in critical social theory and empirical evidence to make nutrition more dimensional and dynamic. We will interrogate how and why anthropologists uncover the lived experiences of being an eater in the world today. This means that we engage in the learning process through deep reading and thoughtful reflection.

This is a class intended to de-stabilize pre-conceived notions and commonly held “logics” about why people are under or over nourished. We will also question how and when nourishment is about more than nutritive content and what it means to be hungry. It is very likely that learning in this class will occur through your willingness to challenge commonly held and socially managed ideas about what it means to be malnourished. To accomplish this we will routinely work to apply our scholarly interrogations (of primary sources) to our own experiences of consumers of food and as citizens of a globe with profound dietary health disparities.

## **Office Hours**

I will hold open office hours on Wednesdays from 10:00-11:00. No appointments necessary! If you can’t make it to this time slot, please email me to schedule another time to meet. While I’m happy to see you smile and wave while you walk past my office door, unscheduled student drop in visits are discouraged.

“THERE ARE THREE WAYS TO ULTIMATE SUCCESS: THE FIRST WAY IS TO BE KIND. THE SECOND WAY IS TO BE KIND. THE THIRD WAY IS TO BE KIND.” *FRED ROGERS*\*\*\*

## Course Policies

**Attendance:** Attendance is essential for successful completion of this course. You will be granted 2 absences without penalty to your participation grade. For every absence beyond 2, your participation grade will drop ½ a letter grade. Should you need to be absent from class more than twice for religious observance, we will then discuss a way to compensate for time lost in the class and there will be no penalty. Please look to Emory’s official list of religious holidays for more information:

[https://www.religiouslife.emory.edu/faith\\_traditions/holidays.html](https://www.religiouslife.emory.edu/faith_traditions/holidays.html)

**Technology:** Electronic usage in this class is flexible, but entails certain standards. If you use your laptop for taking notes on readings, you may use your laptop for accessing your notes during discussion. You will be asked to disconnect from the internet. No laptops are to be used for taking notes in class during lecture. Notetaking during lecture requires paper and a writing utensil. Please **turn off or silence all phones and store out of sight** at the start of class. Phone usage will not be tolerated. Students disregarding this policy will be asked to address the transgression and participation grades will suffer.

**Decorum:** The classroom is space where ideas are respectfully shared. You are not expected to agree with me or your peers, but you are expected to be tactful in the expression of your ideas and response to others. As Mr. Rogers reminds us above, kindness to ourselves and to others is the ultimate route to success.

**Academic Honesty:** As a member of the Oxford College community you are to uphold the Student Honor Code. As a faculty member, it is my duty to report any transgressions. Need a refresher? Visit:

<https://inside.oxford.emory.edu/academics/oxford-honor-council/student-honor-code/>

**Late Work:** All assignments are due on the date listed in this syllabus. Late work will be accepted, but will be subject to penalties. For the first day that an assignment is late, grading will begin at a B (85%). For each subsequent day the assignment is late, an additional 2% points will be taken off. Please do not email me that you are going to turn in an assignment late. Instead, once you have completed the assignment you may email it to me. Extensions without penalty may be granted on a case by case basis and with documented support (i.e. Student Health Center or your academic adviser).

**Grades:** Grades will be assigned thusly: A (93% and above) A- (90-92.99%) B+ (87-89.99%) B (83-86.99%) B- (80-82.99%) C+ (77-79.99%) C (73-76.99%) C- (70-72.99%) D+ (67-69.99%) D (60-66.99%) F (0-59.99%)

I will consider curving grades on content assessments (quizzes and the final exam) when the class median is a B- or less. If consistent curving (or consistent extra credit) occurs in this course, I will not curve (or round up) final grades. That means you could very well have a 92.6% and receive an A-. If, however, I do not curve or provide substantial extra credit, I will consider rounding final grades for students who have adhered to course policies. It is your right and responsibility to discuss dissatisfactory grades with me, but do not expect such discussions to result in a grade change. Approach discussions about grades with an objective that indicates commitment to future improvement. While I acknowledge that grades are an important aspect of your career at Oxford College, it is important to not let grades be the sole currency by which you value your progress as a student. Grades are a metric. Learning is a process. If you aren’t already, start becoming comfortable with the fact that both success and failure are part of the ongoing process of learning. **Effort is expected of you in this and all classes. Do not equate your effort in this class with the automatic achievement of an A.**

# Student Work and Assignments

## Written Reflections/Responses (15%)

In preparation for and digestion of our discussions of readings, there is a two tier system of written reflection. By 8 AM prior to class (beginning January 22 and ending April 25) you should pose a question or comment about the readings. By Sunday at 10 PM (beginning January 27 and ending April 7) you are responsible for submitting a 300-400 word reflection on the week's readings. **I will consistently be checking for your participation on the discussion board. Throughout the semester I will spot grade (i.e. spontaneously—you won't be made aware of when I am grading) 3 of your written reflections.** Both tiers will be graded on a check plus/check/check minus system. Guidelines for this grading will be available on Canvas

## Creative Projects (20%)

Throughout the semester there will be 2 projects that will be creative in design and output. Briefly, the topics of these projects are:

- 1) Cookbook Comparisons (*Assigned 1.31/Due 2.11*)
- 2) Food Bank and Grocery Store Mini Visual Ethnography (*Assigned 4.1/Due 4.11*)

## Participation (20%)

10% of your participation grade will be based on your attendance and engagement in class. Engagement means that you are consistently and actively present. Present means you are paying attention and actively listening. You cannot come to class and sleep and expect a good participation grade. You cannot come to class and use your phone, tablet, or laptop and expect a good participation grade. These are not behaviors indicative of active participation. These are processes of passive engagement. Don't be passive. You can expect at least an A- for this portion of your grade if you do not exhibit passive participation or break course policies. You can expect an A for this portion of your grade if you routinely make substantive contributions to class discussions.

The remaining 10% of your participation grade will come from a mandated group discussion leadership role. Student groups (2-3) will be responsible for leading discussion of one of the four ethnographies. Each student will perform this task once. Guidelines for these roles will be available on Canvas.

**Midterm (15%)** The midterm will be a paper exploring the cultural and nutritional relationship of a contemporary dietary trend. (*Assigned 1.24/Due 3.7*)

**Final Class Project (30%)** For a final in this class we are going to collectively work on a project that assesses the state of culture and nutrition on the Oxford campus. This will involve empirical research (conducting ethnographic methods!) and will entail flexible production of materials for assessment. More details about this assignment will be discussed/distributed prior to spring break.

# **Topics and Reading Schedule**

## **Part 1: Exploring the Relationship Between Culture and Nutrition Anthropologically**

### **Tuesday 1.15 Introductory**

Jones (2010); Omohundro (2013)

### **Thursday 1.17 Cultural interpretations of eating**

Gravy (2015); Tovar (2018) pp. 33-38; Harris (2013)

### **Tuesday 1.22: The political economy of eating**

Belasco (2005); Crooks (2013); Brenton (2013); Tovar (2018): 75-87

### **Thursday 1.24 The political economy of eating**

Offutt (2015); Van Esterik (2013); Ham (2014); The Sporkful (2019)

### **Tuesday 1.29 Nutritionism and the de-culturation of eating**

Kimura et al. (2014); The Secret Ingredient: Nutritionism (2017)

### **Thursday 1.31 Re-cultivating eating**

Mudry et al. (2014); Caldwell (2014)

## **Part 2: Undernourishment**

### **Tuesday 2.5**

*Hunger and Shame* Chapters 1-4

### **Thursday 2.7**

*Hunger and Shame* Chapters 6-7

### **Tuesday 2.12**

*Hunger and Shame* Chapters 8-10

### **Thursday 2.14**

*Hidden Hunger* Chapters 1-2

### **Tuesday 2.19**

*Hidden Hunger* Chapters 3-6

### **Thursday 2.21**

*Hidden Hunger* Chapters 7-8

## **Part 3: Overnourishment**

### **Tuesday 2.26**

Selections from *Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession* (TBD)

### **Thursday 2.28**

*The Weight of Obesity* Introduction and Chapters 1-2

### **Tuesday 3.5**

*The Weight of Obesity* Chapters 3-4

### **Thursday 3.7**

*The Weight of Obesity* Chapters 5-7 and Conclusion

## **3.12-3.14 SPRING BREAK**

## **3.19-3.21 (NO CLASS Project Work)**

#### **Part 4: The Sticky Inbetween: Food Insecurity and Hunger**

##### **Tuesday 3.26**

*The Unending Hunger* Introduction and Chapters 1-3

##### **Thursday 3.28**

Field Trip (Grocery Stores)

##### **Tuesday 4. 2**

*The Unending Hunger* Chapter 4-5 and Conclusion and Epilogue (Discussion)

##### **Thursday 4.4**

Field Trip (Food Banks)

#### **Part 5: Mutually Nourishing Future Hungers (Schedule and Materials TBD)**

Tuesday 4.9 /Thursday 4.11 /Tuesday 4.16 /Thursday 4.18 /Tuesday 4.23 /Thursday 4.25

## **Required Readings (Jan. 15-Apr. 4)**

### **Books**

We are reading four ethnographies in their entirety in this class. These books will be on reserve at the library for a checkout period of 3 hours. In order of reading, these ethnographies are:

Howard, Mary Theresa and Ann Millard. 1997. *Hunger and Shame: Child Malnutrition and Poverty on Mt. Kilimanjaro*. New York: Routledge

Kimura, Aya Hirata. 2013. *Hidden Hunger: Gender and the Politics of Smarter Foods*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press. (ONLINE ACCESS VIA LIBRARY)

Yates-Doerr, Emily. 2015. *The Weight of Obesity: Hunger and Global Health in Post-War Guatemala*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Carney, Megan. 2015. *The Unending Hunger: Tracing Women and Food Insecurity Across Borders*. Berkeley: University of California Press. (ONLINE ACCESS VIA LIBRARY)

### **Articles, Book Chapters**

Belasco, Warren. (2005). Food and the counterculture: A story of bread and politics. In Melissa L. Caldwell and James L. Watson (Eds.) *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating*. (pp. 217-234).

Brenton, Barrett. P. (2013). Pellagra, sex and gender: Biocultural perspectives on differential diets and health. In Darna L. Dufour A.H. Goodman and G.H. Pelto (Eds). *Nutritional Anthropology: Biocultural Perspectives on Food & Nutrition*. (pp. 215-217). New York: Oxford University Press.

Caldwell, Melissa. (2014). Epilogue: Anthropological reflections on critical nutrition. *Gastronomica* 14(3): 67-69.

Crooks, Deborah L. (2013). Trading nutrition for education: Nutritional status and the sale of snack foods in an Eastern Kentucky school. In Darna L. Dufour A.H. Goodman and G.H. Pelto (Eds). *Nutritional Anthropology: Biocultural Perspectives on Food & Nutrition*. (pp. 452-462). New York: Oxford University Press.

Ham, Jessica. (2014). A Ham talks protein. In *This Be Fieldwork* (Blog).  
<https://jessrham.blogspot.com/search?updated-max=2014-08-07T08:59:00-07:00&max-results=7>

Harris, Marvin. (2013). India's sacred cow. In Darna L. Dufour A.H. Goodman and G.H. Pelto (Eds). *Nutritional Anthropology: Biocultural Perspectives on Food & Nutrition*. (pp. 134-138). New York: Oxford University Press.

Jones, Loyal (2010). Corn as a way of life. In Fred W. Sauceman (Ed.) *Cornbread Nation 5: The Best of Southern Food Writing*. (pp. 26-29). Athens: University of Georgia Press.

Kimura, Aya, C. Biltekoff, J. Mudry, J. Hayes-Conroy. (2014). Nutrition as a project. *Gastronomica* 14(3): 34-45.

Messer, Ellen and Parker Shipton. (2002). Hunger in Africa: Untangling its human roots. In Jeremy MacClancy (Ed). *Exotic No More: Anthropology on the Front Lines* (pp. 227-250). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Mudry, Jessica, J. Hayes-Conroy, N. Chen, A. Kimura. (2014). Other ways of knowing food. *Gastronomica* 14(3): 27-33.

Offutt, Chris. (2015). Trash food. *The Oxford American* 88:  
<https://www.oxfordamerican.org/magazine/item/550-trash-food>

Omohundro, John T. (2013). Rough food. In Darna L. Dufour A.H. Goodman and G.H. Pelto (Eds). *Nutritional Anthropology: Biocultural Perspectives on Food & Nutrition*. (pp. 25). New York: Oxford University Press.

Tovar, Virgie. (2018). Dieting: Family, assimilation, and bootstrapping. In *You Have the Right to Remain Fat*. (pp. 33-38). New York: Feminist Press

Tovar, Virgie. (2018). Fatphobia is the new language of classism and racism. In *You Have the Right to Remain Fat*. (pp. 75-87). New York: Feminist Press

Van Esterik, Penny. (2013). From hunger foods to heritage foods: Challenges to food localization in Lao PDR. In Darna L. Dufour A.H. Goodman and G.H. Pelto (Eds). *Nutritional Anthropology: Biocultural Perspectives on Food & Nutrition*. (pp. 18-24). New York: Oxford University Press.