

**ANTHR / ARKEO 2165**  
**‘They Were What They Ate’:**  
**Food in the Ancient World**  
**TR 1:25 – 2:40 pm Morrill Hall 111**  
**Spring 2019**



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*Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1755-1826), French lawyer and politician and renowned epicure credited with writing the first text on gastronomy in 1825, “The Physiology of Taste.”*

## **I. Course Description**

“Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are,” wrote renowned gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin in 1825. Since then, it has become axiomatic within anthropology that social relationships are constructed through food-related practices and embodied in food, from the most basic tasks of acquiring food resources to the social and political contexts of the consumption of food and drink. In this course, we will consider the theoretical and methodological approaches that archaeologists use to study food and eating in ancient societies from a global anthropological perspective. Topics to be addressed include transitions to agriculture; ritual foodways; feasting and politics; gender and identity; colonialism; and food scarcity, among others. Readings will include a range of Old and New World case studies.

This course will consist of lectures, critical film viewings, guest lectures, an on-campus museum collections visit, and seminar-style discussions, including focused partner/small group work.

## **II. Learning Outcomes**

Throughout the completion of this course, students will be expected to:

- Gain an appreciation for the deep history of diverse foods and cuisines around the world
- Garner a broad understanding of the major trends and theoretical foundations related to food-related research in archaeology
- Become familiar with the range of methodological tools/techniques that archaeologists apply to food-related research questions
- Critically evaluate contemporary food systems and their relationships with indigenous and other traditional knowledge systems

### **III. General Course Goals**

Throughout the completion of this course, students are expected to gain confidence in independent research, writing, and public speaking skills by developing effective arguments through written assignments, participating in readings discussions with peers, and workshopping paper and other research ideas with classmates.

Our class operates under feminist pedagogy; i.e., the idea that our classroom is a community to which we each have something to contribute. Students are expected to foster an inclusive and caring classroom community that respects a diversity of opinions and experiences. Our discussions of lecture content, readings, and other course material should always be grounded in archaeological data and anthropological theory; however, I encourage you to think through the social histories of food and cuisine by using your own experiences as learning materials, and, if you are comfortable, to share these stories.

### **IV. Required Materials**

Out of interest in keeping this course low-cost, all readings will be scanned and uploaded as PDFs to the course Blackboard website ([blackboard.cornell.edu](http://blackboard.cornell.edu)). Students are expected to come to seminar having all read the readings listed under that day (outlined on the schedule below).

### **V. Assignments and Grading**

There are five main components to the overall grade in this course, detailed below: (1) attendance and classroom participation; (2) an in-class methods quiz; (3) structured reading responses (three assignments total); (4) a final research paper with nested project benchmarks (topic abstract and annotated bibliography); and (5) an in-class presentation of the final research paper project. Due dates for assignments are listed on the course schedule below. There will be no midterm or final examinations.

#### **Grading Components:**

- **Classroom attendance/participation: 15%**
- **Methods quiz: 15%**
- **Structured reading responses: 30%**
  - Paraphrastic reading exercise (10% of total course grade)
  - Critical reading exercise (10% of total course grade)
  - Dialectical reading exercise (10% of total course grade)
- **Final research paper: 35%**
  - Topic abstract (5% of final research paper grade)
  - Annotated Bibliography (10% of final research paper grade)
- **In-class research presentation: 5%**

## **Grading Scale:**

A+ = 97-100	C+ = 77-79
A = 93-96	C = 73-76
A- = 90-92	C- = 70-72
B+ = 87-89	D+ = 67-69
B = 83-86	D = 63-66
B- = 80-82	D- = 60-62
	F = 59 and below

**Classroom Attendance/Participation:** Attendance is key to success in this course. You will be allowed **two** absences (with or without excuse) without penalty during the course. More than two unexcused absences, and/or poor performance during in-class discussions, group work sessions, or other in-class exercises will adversely affect the attendance and participation component of your grade. If you have a valid excuse for not being in class, please notify the instructor in advance if at all possible. If you are sick, please do not come to class!

Please note that an in-class absence is not a valid excuse for submitting an assignment late on dates they are due. Please plan accordingly or make other arrangements for submission with permission from the instructor.

Your classroom participation grade will be evaluated based on your frequency of attendance **as well as** your quality of contribution to discussion and in-class activities. Students are expected to have done all of the assigned readings and arrive for class with topics and questions prepared for discussion (e.g., you can select particularly interesting or problematic passages within the readings for discussion, formulate your own take on the theories and interpretations presented within the readings, or bring up contrasts between authors read within the course). While active participation in discussion is required, there will be opportunities to participate beyond raising your hand and talking in front of the entire class.

**Methods Quiz:** Your understanding of methods that archaeologists use to identify traces of ancient foods will be assessed through an in-class methods quiz. This quiz will primarily address methods covered in Unit II of the course (see course schedule below) in multiple choice format.

**Structured Reading Responses:** Students will complete three critical reading exercises in response to a specific prompt (each worth 10<sup>0</sup>% of the overall course grade). Detailed instructions with guidelines for structured reading responses will be disseminated throughout the semester (due dates listed on the course schedule below). As written assignments will be discussed in seminar and we may workshop ideas in group format, please be aware that all members of the class may potentially read the writing you produce for this course.

**Final Research Paper:** The final research paper will task you with finding an archaeological topic related to the use of food, drink, or drugs about which you would like to learn more. A detailed prompt will be posted to Blackboard, but your final paper of 8-10 pages should follow the standard conventions of an academic research paper, drawing on **at least five** scholarly sources (e.g., academic articles or book chapters) beyond those assigned in the class.

You will submit an abstract of your paper topic to Blackboard for review by the instructor along with an annotated bibliography in advance of the paper deadline. Papers will primarily be graded based on content but also on clarity and grammar. The due date for the final paper is listed on the course schedule below; please notify me **in advance** if you anticipate any issues turning in the final paper by the deadline for a valid/documented reason.

*Guidelines for submission of written work:*

- Double-space all papers
- Use Times New Roman 12-pt font
- Set standard 1-inch margins
- Include page numbers at the bottom of each page
- At the top of the first page, include your name, assignment number, date, and essay title
- Do not include a separate title page or a separate page for the bibliography
- Proofread and spellcheck

All assignments should be submitted to Blackboard via Turn-it-in on the day they are due (time noted on Blackboard and on the schedule below), but students may be requested to bring copies of papers for in-class workshopping. If hard copies are requested, then students will be notified by the instructor in advance.

Late papers will lose one-half of a letter grade (5% of assignment total) per 24 hours late and will not be accepted after one week, resulting in a zero for that particular assignment.

Please note that while collaborative work in the form of in class peer review/critique of students' essays by one another is authorized in this course, all assignment submissions must originate with you in form and content, and all the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another. Please consult the full policy on academic integrity below.

**In-class research presentation:** During the last class meetings of the semester, students will give a five minute in-class presentation of their final research paper project. Students will present the central points of their project in a clear, direct, and interesting manner catered to a diverse audience. The presentation should consist of a well-organized and succinct summary of your research project using PowerPoint. This assignment presents an opportunity to further hone your public speaking skills and to gain practice disseminating research to your peers.



*A fifth-century B.C. Attic kylix (drinking cup) showing guests at a symposium drinking wine, Berlin State Museum.  
Photo courtesy of National Geographic.*

## ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY

It is expected that students attending Cornell University understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and are willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Knowingly representing the work of others as one's own, obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on examinations or assignments, and fabricating data (among other things) constitute violations of Cornell's Code of Academic Integrity. Any work (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill an academic requirement must represent a student's original work. Representing the words, ideas, or concepts of another person without appropriate attribution is plagiarism. Whenever another person's written work is referenced, whether a single phrase or longer, quotation marks must be used and sources cited. Paraphrasing another's work, i.e., borrowing another's ideas or concepts and putting them into one's "own" words, also must be acknowledged. Plagiarism is not limited to books or articles, but includes web-based materials, including Wikipedia.

Any act of academic dishonesty, such as cheating or plagiarism, may lead to failure on particular assignments or failure in the course. In extreme cases a student may be reported to the Academic Integrity Hearing Board and face dismissal from the university. Please familiarize yourself with the Essential Guide to Academic Integrity at Cornell: <https://ccengagement.cornell.edu/new-student-programs/academic-initiatives>

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, please provide the instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Students are expected to give two weeks notice of their need for accommodations. If you need immediate accommodations, please arrange to meet with the instructor before the beginning of the third class meeting.

## OTHER UNIVERSITY POLICIES

This instructor adheres to and respects Cornell policies and regulations pertaining to the observance of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired student; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. I encourage students to bring any questions or concerns regarding these policies to my attention.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

*The Knight Institute Writing Centers (WC):* The Knight Institute offers students a range of free services to benefit writers of all levels, including one-on-one support to refine and develop strategies for effective writing. Writing tutors are responsive readers who can provide guidance at all stages of the writing process. They also have experience working with non-native English speakers. The WC are open Mondays through Thursdays from 3:30 – 5:30pm (Mann Library & Rockefeller Hall 178) and Sundays through Thursdays from 7:00 – 10:00pm (Olin library Room 403; Uris Library Room 108; Tatkon Center Room 3343). Students can schedule appointments or drop in at a convenient time. For more information or to schedule an appointment, visit: <https://cornell.mywconline.net/>

*Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS):* CAPS offers individual therapy, group counseling, crisis intervention hotlines, help assisting others, and other resources, along with opportunities to de-stress and ways to cope with academic anxiety. Please refer to the CAPS website for more information: <https://health.cornell.edu/services/counseling-psychiatry>

## **VI. Blackboard and Email Policies**

Students can access course materials online on **Blackboard** (<http://blackboard.cornell.edu/>), including the course syllabus, PDFs of course readings, assignments, and other materials posted throughout the semester. Please check your email and the site frequently for course announcements, updates, and deadlines.

Feel free to contact me via email with general questions about the course. However, due to the high volume of emails that I receive, please include the following details with your email so that I do not inadvertently delete it:

- **Put “ANTHR 2165” in the subject line**
- **Include a salutation as well as a signature that includes your full name**

Please allow about 24 hours for me to answer your email, and keep in mind that I may not have access to my email at night or on weekends (e.g., if you send an email after 5 pm on Friday, you should expect a response no earlier than Monday morning at 9 am, so please plan accordingly). If you have detailed questions, especially in regard to written assignments, please make an appointment to see me in office hours, as I will not be able to provide lengthy responses over email. Please note that I may not answer questions over email pertaining to assignments less than 24 hours before the due date.

**Office hours:** I am happy to set individual meetings by appointment; please email me to set up an appointment and **specify your availability** in blocks of days/times. Please note that I am not available for office hours before 9 am or after 5 pm Monday through Friday, or on weekends.

## **VII. General Course Policies**

Students are expected to arrive on time and stay in class during the entire class period. The practice of reading outside material, talking to others, sleeping, texting, viewing media on smartphones/tablets, using headphones in class, etc. is not permitted. These actions are distracting to your instructor and others in class. All cell phone ringers must be turned off during class. Laptops and tablets can be used during class if they are used to take notes.

If you are having personal issues that may affect your academic performance, please talk to me **in advance** so that I can work things out with you in any way I can. Please email me, come to my office hours, or schedule an appointment to meet. I always strive to be accessible, approachable, and understanding. I am happy to help in any way that I can!

## **VIII. Course Schedule**

The course schedule below lists weekly topics, assigned readings, academic holidays, assignment due dates, and other information. Students should complete readings by (or before) the class period listed on the course schedule. Please bring paper or electronic copies of readings to each class. Students can expect to follow this schedule but please note that some items are subject to change. Any changes to the course schedule will be announced in seminar, emailed, and/or posted to Blackboard.

## **UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS OF FOOD AND HUMAN HISTORY**

How do archaeologists (and anthropologists) think about food? What theoretical frameworks enhance our understanding of food and cuisine? How and why did humans evolve to eat the foods we eat? What was the real “paleodiet”? Why did people begin to cultivate plants and herd animals? What are the historical consequences of agricultural intensification and surplus?

### **WEEK 1 COURSE INTRODUCTION**

#### **Tuesday January 22: Course welcome and overview**

*Readings:* none (syllabus and course expectations will be reviewed in class)

#### **Tuesday January 24: What is an archaeology of foodways?**

*Readings:* Renfrew and Bahn 2016 (a good introduction to the discipline for non-archaeologists!); Samuel 1996

### **WEEK 2 ANTHROPOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF FOOD, CUISINE, AND SOCIETY**

#### **Tuesday January 29: How does food define society? How does society define our food?**

*Readings:* Meigs 1987; Rozin et al. 1997; Mead 1971

#### **Thursday January 31: Symbolic or materialist? Historical anthropological approaches to studying food**

*Readings:* Douglas 1971; Harris 1985

**\*\*Assignment Due:** Structured Reading Response #1 (submit to Blackboard by 1:25 pm and bring a hard or electronic copy to class)

### **WEEK 3 ANCIENT FOOD SYSTEMS**

#### **Tuesday February 5: Evolutionary history of the human diet**

*Readings:* Milton 1993; Wood and Schroer 2012

**\*\*Last day to add/change credits by 11:59 pm**

## **Thursday February 7: The real paleodiet? Hunting, foraging, and fishing**

*Readings:* Nabhan 2013; Ember 2014

**\*\***browse <http://thepaleodiet.com/the-paleo-diet-blog/>

## **WEEK 4 IS IT AGRICULTURE YET?**

### **Tuesday February 12: Indicators of plant and animal domestication**

**\*\*Guest lecture Dr. Natalie Mueller, School of Integrative Plant Science, Cornell University)**

*Readings:* Zeder 2006; Langlie et al. 2014

### **Thursday February 14: Storage and surplus**

*Readings:* Kuijt 2015; Hastorf and Foxhall 2017

**\*\*Assignment Due:** Structured Reading Response #2 (submit to Blackboard by 1:25 pm and bring a hard or electronic copy to class)

**\*\*\*Happy Valentine's Day!** Diners around the world are eating a range of foods, from hazelnut candies in Italy to piranha soup in Brazil to heart-shaped omelets in North Korea

## **UNIT II: ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODS FOR STUDYING FOOD**

How does food preserve archaeologically? What methods can archaeologists employ to study the remains of food and drink? In what ways is diet encoded in our skeletons? How did early agricultural groups process and store food? What associated artifacts are available for study in the Cornell Anthropology collections?

## **WEEK 5 STUDYING SKELETONS: PATTERNS IN ANIMAL AND HUMAN BONES**

### **Tuesday February 19: They are what we ate: zooarchaeology**

*Readings:* Landon 2015; Russell and Martin 2012

### **Tuesday February 21: We are what we ate: human skeletal biology**

**\*\*Guest lecture Prof. Matthew Velasco, Department of Anthropology, Cornell University**

*Readings:* Tafuri 2015; Cook and Schurr 2009

## **WEEK 6 PATTERNS IN PLANTS: INSIGHTS FROM PALEOETHNOBOTANY**

**Tuesday February 26: NO CLASS MEETING—FEBRUARY BREAK**

*Readings:* None

**Thursday February 28: Paleoethnobotany: people and plants in the ancient world**

*Readings:* Riehl 2015; Bogaard et al. 2009

## **WEEK 7 BOILING, BAKING, AND POTTERY BREAKING**

**Tuesday March 5: Archaeological correlates of cooking, fermenting, and storage**

*Readings:* Lyons and D'Andrea 2003; Atalay and Hastorf 2006

**Thursday March 7: Anthropology collections visit**

**\*\*Collections tour with Dr. Fred Gleach (following methods quiz)**

*Readings:* None

**\*\*In-class Methods Quiz**

## **UNIT III: THE SOCIAL ROLE OF FOOD AND DRINK**

What are the social and political roles of food and drink? How are food and ritual intertwined? How do feasting events emphasize power or status differences, or reinforce shared group identities and traditions? How is food tied to memory, homeland, ethnicity, and gender? For what purposes have past societies used alcohol and psychoactive substances? Why are cheese and chocolate so delicious?

## **WEEK 8 FEASTING, POWER, AND POLITICAL ECONOMY**

**Tuesday March 12: Feasting with friends, rivals, and ancestors**

*Readings:* Dietler 1996; LeCount 2001

**Thursday March 14: Materializing power and status through foodways**

*Readings:* Welch and Scarry 1995; Kirch and O'Day 2003

## **WEEK 9 ARE WE WHAT WE EAT? FOOD AND IDENTITY**

### **Tuesday March 19: Memories of home: food and ethnicity**

*Readings:* Franklin 2001; Wilk 1999

**\*\*** Last day to drop/change grading basis by 11:59 pm

### **Thursday March 21: On the basis of sex: food and gender**

*Readings:* VanDerwarker and Detwiler 2002; Crown 2000

**\*\*Assignment Due:** Structured Reading Response #3 (submit to Blackboard by 1:25 pm and bring a hard or electronic copy to class)

## **WEEK 10 IT'S (ALMOST) SPRING BREAK! ANCIENT LIBATIONS AND TOOTHsome TREATS**

### **Tuesday March 26: Drinks and drugs!**

*Readings:* Dietler 2006; Balick and Cox 1997

**\*\***Check out <https://www.dogfish.com/brewery/beer/midas-touch>

### **Thursday March 28: Cheese and chocolate**

*Readings:* Salque et al. 2013; McNeil 2009

## **WEEK 11 NO CLASS MEETING—SPRING BREAK!**

*Readings:* None

## **WEEK 12 HOW TO RESEARCH FOODWAYS AT CORNELL**

### **Tuesday April 9: Library research instruction session (Meet at Olin Library)**

*Readings:* Brown 2016

**\*\*Assignment Due:** Research Paper topic abstract due (submit to Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

### **Thursday April 11: NO CLASS—INSTRUCTOR AT CONFERENCE**

*Readings:* None (Use this time to work on paper research and file your taxes!)

## **UNIT IV: SCARCITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE**

What environmental factors impact food systems? What happens when there is not enough food? How do individuals and societies adapt to scarcity? How do indigenous and other forms of traditional knowledge inform us about the sustainability of local resources? What topics on the archaeology of food would you like to learn more about? Will this semester ever end?

### **WEEK 13 SCARCITY AND SUSTAINABILITY**

#### **Tuesday April 16: Hunger and food scarcity**

*Readings:* Minnis 1991; Ellis et al. 2011

#### **Thursday April 18: Biodiversity, sustainability, and resilience**

**\*\*Guest lecture Prof. Paula Turkon, Department of Environmental Studies and Sciences, Ithaca College**

*Readings:* TBA

### **WEEK 14 INDUSTRIAL AND INDIGENOUS FOOD SYSTEMS**

#### **Tuesday April 23: Consequences of industrial food production**

*Readings:* Nabhan 2013

**\*\*DIY reading** (bring an article to class that represents an issue not covered in the course or an issue you would like to learn more about, may be part of your final paper research)

#### **Thursday April 25: Decolonizing cuisine**

*Readings:* Nabhan 2013; Dubin and Tolley 2008

**\*\*Read** <https://www.berkeleyside.com/2018/07/16/cafe-ohlone-by-mak-amham-gives-a-taste-of-the-east-bays-first-most-local-food>

**\*\*Assignment Due:** Annotated bibliography due (submit to Blackboard by 11:59 pm)

### **WEEK 15: TASTING IT FOR OURSELVES! STUDENT PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Tuesday April 30: In class research presentations**

*Readings:* None

**\*\*Assignment Due:** Research paper PPT presentation (Group 1)

**Thursday May 2: In class research presentations**

*Readings:* None

*\*\*Assignment Due:* Research paper PPT presentation (Group 2)

**WEEK 16: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS AND COMMENSAL FEAST!**

**Tuesday May 7: In class presentations and feast!**

*Readings:* None

*\*\*Assignment Due:* Research paper PPT presentation (Group 3)

*\*\*\*You are invited to bring a potluck item to share (a dish/snack/non-alcoholic drink) to class that reflects who you are, where you come from, or anything you like to eat!*

**FINALS WEEK: NO CLASS MEETING**

*Assignment due:* Final research paper (8-10 pages) due to Blackboard Tuesday 5/14 by 11:59 pm

**Have a great semester!**



*Vessel depicting a maize deity, Moche culture, ca. 600 CE.  
Photo courtesy of the Museo Larco, Lima, Peru*

## Syllabus Bibliography

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2016 *Writing in Anthropology: A Brief Guide*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

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