

## **ANT 612 Seminar in Biocultural Anthropology: Biocultural Aspects of Food and Nutrition**

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Spring 2014  
Phone: 348-5947  
Office Hrs: Tues 3:30-4:30, Thur 1-2:00 or by appt

Dr. Kathryn S. Oths  
24D ten Hour  
Email: [koths@as.ua.edu](mailto:koths@as.ua.edu)

### **Course Description**

The course is designed as an advanced seminar for upper-level graduate students to explore in depth the interaction of biological, social, and cultural factors in determining human diet, nutrition, and health. Major anthropological contributions will be highlighted, along with works from nutrition, epidemiology, evolutionary psychology, and other fields. As a seminar, it is expected that students will come to class well-prepared by having closely and critically read, outlined, and annotated the assigned articles. Class discussion will be conducted by the students and facilitated by the professor.

### **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course, PhD and advanced MA students should have:

- gained a greater appreciation and understanding of the role of food in the shaping of society and culture across time.
- improved their ability to conduct and engage in class discussion
- increased their reading rate and comprehension
- enhanced their ability to present a cogent argument in written essay form

### **Assignments**

As a seminar, it is expected that students will come to class well-prepared by having closely and critically read, outlined, and annotated the assigned articles. Class discussion will be conducted by the students and facilitated by the professor. Two 10-page papers will be due, at mid-term and end-of-semester, on a topic selected by the student and approved by the professor. The first paper is due Week 8, and the second Week 15. The topic should expand upon a theme already covered in class readings. During class sessions, all students should endeavor to participate equally in the discussion.

### **Grading**

Grades will be calculated as 50% on class participation and 25% on each of the (2) 10-page written assignments. The first paper is due Week 8, and the second Week 15. There is no mandatory attendance policy; however, each absence will lower the final grade 3%

### **Policy on Attendance and Missed Classes**

There is no mandatory attendance policy; however, each absence will lower the final grade 3%. With a legitimate excuse, partial make-up for a missed class can be arranged on an individual basis in consultation with the professor. If the final paper is not received by the deadline, an incomplete grade will be assigned. Late papers will be accepted with a grade penalty of up to one full letter.

### **Policy on Academic Misconduct**

All students in attendance at the University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student. [The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy](#) will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

## **Required Readings**

The reading list has been determined, in part, through consultation with the students regarding their primary research interests.

### *Books:*

- 1) Bellisari, Anna 2013 *The Obesity Epidemic in North America: Connecting Biology and Culture*. Waveland Press.
- 2) Holmes, Seth 2013 *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. U California Press.
- 3) Pollan, Michael 2008 *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*. The Penguin Press: New York.
- 4) RECOM: Counihan, Carole and Van Esterik, Penny (eds 1 and 2) 1997, 2007 *Food and Culture: A Reader*. (not required but probably cheaper to buy than xeroxing the several chapters we'll use)

### *Articles:*

Articles will be available electronically on Blackboard. Students are encouraged to acquire copies of the texts through online second-hand book sources. Some useful websites include:

Abebooks ([www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com))

Barnes and Noble ([www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com))

Bibliofind ([www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/books/misc/bibliofind.html/002-7905929-3391248](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/subst/books/misc/bibliofind.html/002-7905929-3391248))

Powell's Books ([www.powells.com](http://www.powells.com))

BookFinder.com ([www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com))

Combined site search: ([www.addall.com](http://www.addall.com))

## **CLASS SCHEDULE**

### **Weekly Topics and Readings**

#### **WEEK 1: Introduction**

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

Harris, Marvin 1985 *Introduction*. In: *Good to Eat: Riddles of Food and Culture*. Waveland Press.

#### **WEEK 2: Early Diet and the Evolution of Food Use**

Harris, Marvin 1987 *Foodways: Historical overview and theoretical prolegomenon*. In: *Food and Evolution: Towards a Theory of Human Food Habits*. Edited by Marvin Harris and Erica B. Ross, Temple University Press.

Armelagos, George 1987 Biocultural aspects of food choice. In: Food and Evolution: Towards a Theory of Human Food Habits. Edited by Marvin Harris and Erica B. Ross, Temple University Press.

Bogin, Barry 1991 Evolution of Human Nutrition. In: The Anthropology of Medicine: From Culture to Method, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Lola Romanuci-Ross.

Ritenbaugh, Cheryl 1978 Human foodways: A Window on Evolution. In: The Anthropology of Health. E. Bauwens, ed. Pp. 111-120, CV Mosby.

Eibl-Eibesfeldt, Irenaus 1996 The evolution of nutrient dominance. In: Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. Edited by Polly Weissner and Wulf Schiefenhover, Berghahn Books.

Nestle, Marion 1999 Animal v. Plant Foods in Human Diets and Health: Is the Historical Record Unequivocal? Proceedings of the Nutrition Society 58(2): 211-128.

Film: ~~The Omnivore: Satisfying Humanity's Hunger (48 min)~~  
Food [http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article\\_29082.cfm](http://www.organicconsumers.org/articles/article_29082.cfm)

Recommended:

Ungar, Peter S. and Mark Teaford 2002 Human Diet: Its Origin and Evolution. Praeger.

Crowe, Ivan 2000 The Quest for Food. Its Role in Human Evolution and Migration. Tempus Publishing Ltd, Stroud.

### **WEEK 3: The Problem of Obesity**

Bellisari, Anna 2013 The Obesity Epidemic in North America

### **WEEK 4: Some Less Known Physiological Consequences of Food Choice**

Sawaya, AL, Grill, LP, and Roberts, SB. 1998 Mild stunting is associated with higher susceptibility to the effects of high fat diets: Studies in a shantytown population in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Journal of Nutrition 128(2supp):4155.

Hales, C. Nicholas and Barker, David J.P. 2001 The thrifty phenotype hypothesis. British Medical Bulletin 60:5-20.

~~Dettwyler, K. 2008 The biocultural approach in nutritional anthropology: case studies of malnutrition in Mali. In: Medical Anthropology, Edited by Cecil G. Helman, Ashgate.~~

Cone, Richard and Emily Martin 2003 Corporeal flows: The immune system, global economies of food, and new implications for health. In: Social and Cultural Lives of Immune Systems. Edited by James M. Wilce, Jr. Routledge.

Cha, Youn-Soo et al. 2013 Kochujang, fermented soybean-based red pepper paste, decreases visceral fat and improves blood lipid profiles in overweight adults. Nutrition & Metabolism, 10:24.

Cooper, Amy 2004 Supersize: A comparative discourse on the hormonal etiology of obesity. Unpublished manuscript.

Lustig, R. et al. 2012 The toxic truth about sugar. *Nature* 482:27-29.

Recom:

Katz, Solomon 1987 Fava bean consumption: A case for the co-evolution of genes and culture. In: *Food and Evolution: Towards a Theory of Human Food Habits*. Edited by Marvin Harris and Erica B. Ross, Temple University Press.

### **WEEK 5: Measurement Issues: Ritual, Symbolic, Interpretive Approaches**

Pellett, P.L. Problems and pitfalls in the assessment of human nutritional status. In: *Food and Evolution: Towards a Theory of Human Food Habits*. Edited by Marvin Harris and Erica B. Ross, Temple University Press.

Salazar, Melissa, Gail Feenstra, and Jeri Ohmart *Salad Days: Using Visual Methods to Study Children's Food Culture*, In: *Food and Culture: A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Quandt, Sarah A. 1986 Nutritional anthropology: The individual focus. In: *Training Manual in Nutritional Anthropology*. Edited by Sarah A. Quandt and Cheryl Ritenbaugh, Publication No. 20, AAA.

Douglas, Mary 1966 Chapter 3: The Abominations of Leviticus. In: *Purity and Danger*, Routledge.

Douglas, Mary 1982 Food as a system of communication In: *In the Active Voice*, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Levi-Strauss, Claude 1997 The culinary triangle. In: *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Film: *Food: Myths and Taboos* (23 min)

Recommended:

Counihan, Carole M. (ed) 1999 *The Anthropology of Food and Body: Gender, Meaning, and Power*. Routledge. (4 chapters on recent changes in Italian foodways)

Shack, William A. Hunger, anxiety and ritual: Deprivation and spirit possession among the Gurage of Ethiopia. In: *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

### **WEEK 6: Social Structural Approaches: Food and Identity**

Bourdieu, P. 1984 Ch. 5. The sense of distinction. In: *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*.

Bindon, James R. 1988 Taro or rice, plantation or market: Dietary choices in American Samoa. *Food and Foodways* 3:59-78.

de Garine, Igor 1996 Food and the status quest in five African cultures. In: Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. Edited by Polly Weissner and Wulf Schiefenhovel, Berghahn Books.

Wilk, R. 2007 'Real Belizean Food': Building Local Identity in the Transnational Caribbean, In: Food and Culture: A Reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Diner, H. 2001 Black bread, hard bread: Food, class and hunger in Italy. In: Hungering for America.

Conklin, A. et al. 2013 Social relationships and healthful dietary behaviour: Evidence from over-50s in the EPIC cohort, UK. Soc Sci Med.

Film: Food and Intimacy (23 min)

Recommended:

Fischler Claude 1988 Food, Self, and Identity. Social Science Information, 27:275-292.

Kahn, Miriam 1998 "Men are taro" (they cannot be rice): Political aspects of food choices in Wamira, Papua New Guinea. In: Food and Gender: Identity and Power. Edited by Carole M. Counihan and Steven L. Kaplan. Harwood.

Szurek, Sarah 2005 Social Identity and Food Choice in the Southeastern United States. SAFN.

### **WEEK 7: Cognitive Approaches: Social Status and Food Choice**

Newkirk, Christine N., Kathryn S. Oths, William W. Dressler and José Ernesto dos Santos 2009 Intracultural diversity in food knowledge in southern Brazil. Ecology of Food and Nutrition. 48:

Oths, Kathryn, Adriana Carolo and Jose Ernesto Dos Santos 2003 Social status and food preferences in Southeast Brazil. Ecology of Food and Nutrition 42:303-324.

Dressler, William W., Rosane Pilot Ribeiro, Mauro Campos Balieiro, Kathryn S. Oths, José Ernesto Dos Santos 2004 Eating, drinking and being depressed: The social, cultural and psychological context of alcohol consumption and nutrition in a Brazilian community. Social Science and Medicine 59:709-720.

Dos Santos, José Ernesto, Kathryn S. Oths, and William W. Dressler 2001 Socioeconomic factors and adult body composition in a developing society. Revista Brasileira de Hipertensão. 8(2):173-178.

Boster, J. and S. Weller 1990 Cognitive and contextual variation in hot-cold classification. Am Anthropol 92:171-179.

Recommended:

Goody, Jack 1982 Cooking, Cuisine and Class. Cambridge University Press.

### **WEEK 8: Spotlight on Native and Latin America**

**\*\*\* FIRST PAPER DUE\*\*\***

Pelto, Gretel 1987 Social class and diet in contemporary Mexico. In: Food and Evolution: Towards a Theory of Human Food Habits. Edited by Marvin Harris and Erica B. Ross, Temple University Press.

Counihan, C. 2007 *Mexicanas'* Food Voice and Differential Consciousness in the San Luis Valley of Colorado, In: Food and Culture: A Reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Graham, Margaret 2002 Food, Health, and identity. In: Medical Pluralism in the Andes.

Pilcher, J. 2007 Taco Bell, Maseca, and Slow Food: A Postmodern apocalypse for Mexico's Peasant Cuisine? In: Food and Culture: A Reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Orr, D. 2013 "Now he walks and walks, as if he didn't have a home where he could eat": Food, healing, and hunger in Quechua narratives of madness. *Cult Med Psychiat* 37:694-710.

Weidman, D. 2012 Native American embodiment of the chronicities of modernity. *MAQ* 26:595-612.

Recommended:

Baer, Roberta 1998 *Cooking - and Coping - Among the Cacti: Diet, Nutrition and Available Income in Northwestern Mexico*

Pilcher, Jeffrey 2005 *Industrial tortillas and folkloric Pepsi: The nutritional consequences of hybrid cuisines in Mexico.* In: *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader.* Edited by James L. Watson and Melissa L. Caldwell. Blackwell Publishing.

DeWalt, Kathleen Musante 1983 *Nutritional strategies and agricultural change in a Mexican community.* Ann Arbor, MI : UMI Research DeWalt Press,

Pilcher, Jeffrey 1998 *Que Vivan Los Tamales: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity.*

Backstrand J.R., L.H Allen, G.H. Pelto, A Chavez 1997 Examining the gender gap in nutrition: an example from rural Mexico. *Social Science and Medicine* 44(11):1751-1759.

Pelto GH, Urgello J, Allen LH, Chavez A, Martinez H, Meneses L, Capacchione C, Backstrand J. Household size, food intake and anthropometric status of school-age children in a highland Mexican area. Department of Nutritional Sciences, University of Connecticut, Storrs 06268

Allen LH, JR Backstrand, A Chávez, GH Pelto 1992 *Humans Cannot Live by Tortillas Alone: The Results of the Mexico Nutrition CRSP - Final report to USAID.* Department of Nutritional Sciences, University of Connecticut.

## **WEEK 9: Political Economic Approaches: Colonialism, Food Insecurity and Food Aid**

Mintz, S. 2007 Time, Sugar, and Sweetness, In: Food and Culture: A Reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Franke, Richard 1987 The effects of colonialism and neocolonialism on the gastronomic patterns of the third world. In: Food and Evolution: Towards a Theory of Human Food Habits. Edited by Marvin Harris and Erica B. Ross, Temple University Press.

Shipton, P. 1990 African famines and food security: Anthropological perspectives. *Annu Rev Anthropol* 19:353-94.

Gross, Rainer and Gunter Dresrusse 1996 Nutritional security and the status quest in developing countries. In: Food and the Status Quest: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. Edited by Polly Weissner and Wulf Schiefenovel, Berghahn Books.

Clapp, J. 2007 The Political Economy of Food Aid in an Era of Agricultural Biotechnology, In: Food and Culture: A Reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Fitchen, Janet 1988 Hunger, Malnutrition and Poverty in the contemporary United States: Some observations on their social and cultural context. *Food and Foodways* 2:309-333.

Hadley

Webb, Coates, et al (2006) Meas HH Food Insecurity.

Himmelgreen, David 2000 Food insecurity among low-income hispanics in Hartford, Connecticut: Implications for public health policy. *Human Organization* 59(3):334-342.

Janes, Craig and Oyuntsetseg Chuluundorj 2004 Free Markets and Dead Mothers: The Social Ecology of Maternal Mortality in Post-Socialist Mongolia *MAQ* 18(2):230-257.

Griffiths, Marica and Michael Favin 1999 Cultural tailoring in Indonesia's national nutritional improvement program. In: *Anthropology in Public Health*, edited by Robert Hahn.

Barndt, D. 2007 Whose 'Choice'? 'Flexible' Women Workers in the Tomato Food Chain, In: Food and Culture: A Reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Recommended:

Murphy, Sophia and Kathy McAfee 2005 US Food Aid: Time to Get it Right. Report of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy.

## **WEEK 10: Political Economic Approaches: Food Politics**

Holmes, Seth 2013 *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States*. U California Press.

## **WEEK 11: Political Economic Approaches: Food Politics, cont.**

Pollan, Michael 2008 *In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto*.

Weismantel, Mary and Sidney Mintz 1999 *Sweet interloper*. In: *The Globalization of Food*, edited by Leonard Plotnicov and Richard Scaglione, Waveland Press.

Recommended:

Mintz, Sidney 1985 *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*.

Nestle, Marion 2002 *Food Politics: How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health* U of California Press.

## **WEEK 12: Consumption and Availability**

Added late: Curry (2013 Nature) The milk revolution

Wiley, Andrea 2007 Transforming milk in a global economy. *Am Anthropol* 109(4):666-677.

Crooks, Deborah 2003 Trading nutrition for education: Nutritional status and the sale of snack foods in an Eastern Kentucky School. *MAQ* 17(2):182-199.

Leatherman, Thomas and Allan Goodman 2005 Coca-colonization of diets in the Yucatan. *Soc Sci Med* 61(4):833-846.

Allison, A. 2007 Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch Box as Ideological State, Apparatus In: *Food and Culture: A Reader*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Imbruce, V. 2006 From the bottom up: The global expansion of Chinese vegetable trade for the New York City markets. In: *Fast Food/Slow Food: The Cultural Economy of the Global Food System*. Richard Wilk, ed.

Oths, K. and K.Groves 2012 Chestnuts and Spring Chickens: Conflict and Change in Farmer's Market Ideologies. *Ecology of Food and Nutrition* 51(2):1-20.

Recommended:

Antin, T.M. and M. T. Hora 2005 Distance and beyond: Variables influencing conceptions of food store accessibility in Baltimore, Maryland. *Practicing Anthropology* 27(2):15-17.

Barthes, Roland 1997 Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption In: *Food and Culture: A Reader*. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

## **WEEK 13: Cultural Constructivist Approaches: Food Norms, Fat Issues**



Mead, M. The Problem of Changing Food Habits 2007 In: Food and Culture: A Reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Leitch, A. 2000 The social life of *lardo*: slow food in fast times. Asia Pac J. Anthropol 1:103-118.

Goody, Jack 1997 Industrial food: Towards the development of a world cuisine In: Food and Culture: A Reader. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Kandel, Randy F., and Gretel H. Pelto 1980 The Health Food Movement: Social Revitalization or Alternative Health Maintenance System? In Nutritional Anthropology: Contemporary Approaches to Diet & Culture. Norge W. Jerome, Randy F. Kandel, and Gretel H. Pelto, eds. Pp. 327-363. Pleasantville, NY: Redgrave.

Weismantel, M. 2005 White. In: Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession, edited by Don Kulick and Anne Meneley, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin.

Graham, Mark 2005 Chaos. In: Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession, edited by Don Kulick and Anne Meneley, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin.

Film: Food for Body and Spirit (China, 48 min)

\*\*\*\*\* **Spring Break** \*\*\*\*\*

#### **WEEK 14 Disordered Eating**

Powdermaker, Hortense 1997 An anthropological approach to the problem of obesity. In: Food and Culture: A Reader. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Brewis, A. and M. Gartin 2006 Biocultural Construction of Obesogenic Ecologies of Childhood: Parent-Feeding Versus Child-Eating Strategies. Am J of Hum Biology 18:203–213

Chowdhury, AM 2008 Food beliefs and practices among British Bangladeshis with diabetes: implications for health education. In: Medical Anthropology, Edited by Cecil G. Helman, Ashgate.

Bordo, Susan 1997 Anorexia nervosa: Psychopathology as the crystalization of culture. In: Food and Culture: A Reader. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. (orig. pub. as Chapter 5 in Susan Bordo 1993 Unbearable Weight).

Stinson, Kandi M. 2001 Ch. 7 Speaking of Weight. In: Women and Dieting Culture: Inside a Commercial Weight Loss Group. Rutgers University Press.

Parasecoli, F. 2007 Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men's Fitness Magazines, In: Food and Culture: A Reader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Recommended:

Kulick, D. and Machado-Borges, T. 2005 Leaky. In: Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession, edited by Don Kulick and Anne Meneley, Jeremy P. Tarcher/Penguin.

## **WEEK 15 Food as Medicine**

\*\*\*\*\* **SECOND PAPER DUE** \*\*\*\*\*

Anderson, E.N. 1997 Traditional Medical Values of Food In: Food and Culture: A Reader. Edited by Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik.

Counihan, Carole 2003 Food Contagion. International Herald of Taste No. 39.  
[http://www.slowfood.com/img\\_sito/riviste/slow/EN/39/contagio.html](http://www.slowfood.com/img_sito/riviste/slow/EN/39/contagio.html)

Oths, K. 1992 Some symbolic dimensions of Andean materia medica. Central Issues in Anthropology 10:76-85.

Nichter, Mark 1986 Modes of Food Classification and the Diet-Health Contingency: A South Indian Case Study. In: Food, Society, and Culture: Aspects in South Asian Food Systems. R.S. Khare & M.S.A. Rao (eds), Carolina Academic Press.

Etkin, Nina L. and Paul J. Ross 1991 Recasting Malaria, Medicine, and Meals: A Perspective on Disease Adaptation. In: The Anthropology of Medicine: From Culture to Method, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Edited by Lola Romanucci\_Ross, Daniel E. Moerman, and Laurence R. Tancredi, Bergin & Garvey.

Peterson, T. Sarah 2005 Food as Devine Medicine. *In* The Taste Culture Reader: Experiencing Food and Drink. Pp. 147-153. Carolyn Korsmeyer, ed. Oxford, UK: Berg.

### RECOMMENDED:

Chen, N. 2009 Food, Medicine, and the Quest for Good Health: Nutrition, Medicine and Culture. Columbia U Press.