

## ANTHROPOLOGY 3326G-650

### Special Topics in Anthropology – Anthropology of Food

#### COURSE OUTLINE

Winter 2024



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#### Instructor and course information:

Instructor: Adriana Premat

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Credit Value: 0.5

Antirequisites: None.

Prerequisite: Registration in third year in any module.

**\* Please note: This course has been designed for anthropology students, so it is strongly recommended that students enrolling in it have some anthropology background.**

Mode of delivery: This course is *asynchronous* (online). Students will be provided with a variety of lesson materials and activities that can be done throughout the week, although there may be tasks that must be completed by specific times.

#### Course Description:

For humans, food and the act of eating involve a lot more than merely meeting biological needs. Food is imbued with meaning, it shapes our bodies and our sense of who we are, as individuals and as members of distinctive communities. Moreover, the production, distribution, procurement, preparation, and consumption of food bind us to others, illuminating ties of solidarity and inequality at the level of the household, the nation, and

the world. This course explores the sociocultural dimension of food, encouraging reflection on how it connects to our sense of self, the visible and invisible relations that structure our lives, and the actions taken by some to redress a dominant food system that is variously blamed for food scares, ill health, food insecurity, animal cruelty, and environmental degradation.

The course is organized around a set of weekly themes developed through online lectures and required readings. In-lesson questions and guided assignments that include hands-on, multimedia and written components, will be used to encourage students to reflect on course content and arrive at joint insights. Online quizzes will aid in testing student's overall understanding of course materials. Weekly lessons, including assigned readings, audiovisual material, asynchronous group activities, and quizzes should be completed sequentially and following set deadlines.

*Under the tab "Weekly Activity Schedule", you will find a list of course readings and course activities by week.*

### **Learning Outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define key concepts associated with the study of food in anthropology.
- Illustrate, via concrete ethnographic examples, how food connects to one's sense of self and the creation and maintenance of social boundaries.
- Trace how our food consumption connects us to other places, environments and people.
- List the weaknesses and advantages of a globalized food system.
- Describe, via concrete examples, contemporary consumption practices and political struggles that aim to redefine our dominant food system.
- Critically assess the role of transnational institutions, business corporations, governments and civil society actors in ensuring or preventing the attainment of food security, food justice and food sovereignty.
- Apply key concepts associated with food studies to their own experiences.

### **Course Materials:**

Registered students will be able to access course readings through the course site in OWL before the first day of class.

### **Evaluation:**

Introductions	5%
Assignment I	20%
Assignment II	25%
Quiz I and II	20% (10% each)
Final Exam	20%
Participation	10%

### Online Group Activities:

Exchanging ideas with peers is an extremely important component of learning and, for this reason, during the course, students will be required to join in asynchronous online discussions and brainstorming sessions. To participate in these online discussions, before

Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup>, ALL students must sign into VoiceThread (VT) so the professor can assign them to a group.

### Introductions – 5%

Using VT, students will introduce themselves by providing their name, and briefly telling the class what their favourite food or dish is and why they like it (taste, convenience, cultural associations, fond memories, etc.). Students will be asked to take the time to listen to their classmates' introductions before they make their own entries and will be invited to engage with them by integrating some of their comments. Since students will be working closely with classmates throughout the course, this exercise provides a good opportunity to start building connections.

### Quizzes I and II - 20% (10% each)

Approximately every four weeks up to week 8, students will be required to write a non-cumulative online quiz that will be based on the readings and lecture material covered over the current and the previous three weeks. Each quiz should take no more than an hour to complete (times will vary depending on the type of questions included). The quizzes may involve a mixture of true and false, fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice and short answer questions. Each quiz will be worth 10% of the total course grade. Given the flexibility of these online quizzes (you have about a week to complete them) extensions will not be granted beyond the stipulated deadlines (February 4 and March 10).

### Final Exam – 20%

The final exam will take place during the examination period scheduled by the Registrar's Office. The exam will be an online cumulative exam that will be based primarily on the readings and lecture material covered over the current and the previous three weeks. The exam should take approximately an hour to complete (time will vary depending on the type of questions included) and may involve a mixture of true and false, fill-in-the blank, multiple choice and short answer questions.

### Participation – 10%

At different points during online lessons, students will be required to submit comments or respond to one or two survey questions for which there is no wrong or right answer. These questions assess the knowledge base of the group and encourage further reflection and debate on lesson topics. Each answer will count towards the total participation grade.

### Assignment I: Food, Identity and Sociality – 20%

Anthropologists interested in food consumption often pay attention to mundane activities such as cooking and eating. This assignment gets students to consider their personal food tastes, dietary habits and "traditions" paying attention, among other things, to how food is wrapped up with their sense of self, personal affections, and group membership. This assignment has three parts which include sharing with the class their favourite recipe with accompanying photos and a 2-4 sentence description that outlines how, when, and by whom the recipe is prepared and consumed. The commentary should further highlight why the recipe and resulting dish hold importance to the student and their family or broader community. Students will begin working on part 1 of the assignment on Week 2 and will

complete the full assignment by February 12th at 11:55 pm EST (Week 6) when they will submit a short 650-word reflection that will integrate other students' submissions, as well as relevant course readings. More detailed guidelines on this assignment will be provided in the appropriate lesson pages on OWL

### Assignment II: Our Food in Broader Perspective - 25%

Although many anthropologists today still work with clearly identifiable "local" communities, most ethnographic work pays attention to how the lives of research subjects are shaped by a broader context that involves distant places and actors. In this assignment, students are asked to reflect on how, through their food consumption practices, they are connected to other people and other places. The objective here is to get students to reflect on their diet in broader context and to discover the usefulness, and limits, of key concepts covered in this segment of the course (e.g. global food systems, neoliberal food regimes, flexible labour, the meaning of "local" food, etc.). The assignment has three parts. Part 1 involves students posting, and commenting on a newspaper article on migrant farm workers in Canada. Part 2 requires engaging in reflections on a related movie and part 3 involves the writing of a short, 650-word reflection by March 18th at 11:55 pm EST (Week 10). More detailed guidelines on this assignment will be provided in the appropriate lesson pages on OWL.

Note that the above course assignments are broken up into parts to help students prepare for their reflection papers through the guided completion of smaller, preliminary tasks, including the collection of additional material and insights derived from focused group debates.

### **Required Readings**

The number of pages you will be expected to read for this course will vary from week to week and will depend on the time taken up by other lesson material (e.g. audiovisuals, debate sessions, etc.). In general, you will read from 30-50 pages a week.

### **Audiovisual Material**

The lessons include a range of audiovisual materials, which are an integral part of the lesson. You will be tested on this material via the quizzes, debates, and written assignments.

### **Academic Statements and Policies:**

All students should familiarize themselves with Western's current [Academic Rights and Responsibilities](#) policies in the Academic Calendar. Such items include accommodations for students with disabilities, religious holidays, consideration for medical illness, academic appeals, plagiarism and scholastic offences, and code of student conduct.

#### Academic Integrity - Statement on Plagiarism:

Students must write their assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing. It is also a scholastic offence to submit the same work for credit in more than one course. Plagiarism is a major scholastic offence.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and [Turnitin.com](https://www.turnitin.com).

### Course-Specific Conditions Required to Pass this Course

To pass this essay course, students must submit and receive a passing grade on the **two written assignments required for the course (Assignment I and Assignment II)**.

### Technology/Equipment

This is an online course and it is the student's responsibility to ensure that they have the right computer equipment, internet connection, browser, skills, etc., to complete course lessons and assignments. Western's OWL online course management program will be used for providing the course outline and weekly schedule, completing quizzes (using the Test and Quizzes tool), providing, submitting, and returning assignments (using the Assignments tool), communications with the class (using the Announcements and Zoom tools), and posting grades (using the Gradebook tool).

The professor or teaching assistant will not answer questions related to technology. If you run into technical difficulties, please, contact Western Technology Services or [OWL help](#).

### Questions on Course Related Content

For questions of general interest to the class, students should post their queries to the appropriate forum in OWL. For private consultations, students should email the professor requesting a zoom meeting.

### Academic Consideration for Student Absences

For students who have missed, or will miss, any course work, whether it be for medical-related or non-medical related reasons, please read the details and instructions on ["What is Academic Consideration"](#).

No accommodations will be granted retroactively more than 10 days after an assignment's due date or a missed quiz or test. Please see your academic counsellor immediately if you will be seeking accommodations based on medical or compassionate grounds.

### Accessible Education

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. Please see Accessible Education for information.