

*Note: this syllabus is not a contract. It is subject to further change or revision, to best realize the educational goals of the course. Revisions will be announced in class or in course materials online with appropriate prior notice.*

**San José State University  
Department of Anthropology**

**ANTH 107 Eating Culture**  
*The Anthropology of Food*

Section 01 (22629), SPRING 2021

ONLINE, ASYNCHRONOUS

**Course and Contact Information**

Instructor:	Dr. Melissa Beresford
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Office Hours:	Tu/Th 8:00 am – 9:00 am via Zoom (see departmental website for Zoom link)
Class Days/Time:	N/A: All course material will be posted online (see course format description below)
Pre-requisites	ANTH 11 or instructor consent and upper division standing

**Course Description**

Everyone eats. Food is about survival. But we don't eat everything. What we choose to eat and how we eat is deeply cultural. It tells us much about who we are and want to be, what we value, and how we relate to each other and the world we live in. This course applies core ideas and skills from anthropology to understand food as a means to understand human culture, identity, and meaning. The course is suitable for non-majors, and emphasizes “doing” of anthropology alongside core concepts.

**Course Learning Goals**

In addition to learning broadly about the relationship between food, eating, and culture, by the end of this course, students will have demonstrated they can:

- Situate their own and others' identity within social meanings of food and eating within the context of broader cultural perspectives and traditions.
- Recognize the complexity of interconnections between people, food and food systems across a globalized world, including how they connect to power.

- Build skills in applying an “ethnographic approach,” through cultural observation, interviewing, and cultural interpretation.
- Synthesize and express complicated and potentially sensitive ideas effectively to an audience, both in writing and verbally, and debate complex issues from both sides, identifying points of commonality.

**Course Format**

This will be an asynchronous online course, taught in modular format. This means that there are no designated class meeting times. Rather, all course material will be posted in modular format on the course Canvas site. There are 6 course modules. Each module contains a series of lectures, readings, and activities (reading responses and class discussion via the online discussion boards). In addition to the 6 course modules, there are three written assignments that require students to conduct guided independent research and analysis. Students are required to complete the course modules and the written assignments by the dates outlined in the course schedule.

**Required Texts/Readings (Required)**

There is no required textbook for this course. All course readings will be provided to you via the class Canvas platform

**Final Grades** (based on percentage of total possible points)

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Course Points</i>	<i>Assessment</i>
<i>A</i>	92.5-100	Excellent
<i>A minus</i>	89.5-92.4	Excellent
<i>B plus</i>	87.5-89.4	Good
<i>B</i>	82.5-87.4	Good
<i>B minus</i>	79.5-82.4	Good
<i>C plus</i>	77.5-79.4	Average
<i>C</i>	69.5-77.4	Average
<i>D</i>	59.5-69.4	Passing
<i>F</i>	Less than 59.5	Failure

Note on “rounding” grades: The grades here have already been “rounded up” – meaning, if you earn an 89.5, I round up to give you an A minus (rather than a B plus). Grades will not be rounded up further than what is already stated here.

*For your own protection, you should keep a copy of everything you hand in, and you should keep your graded assignments at least until grades are finalized at the end of the semester, and in the event you wish to contest any grades.*

## Course Requirements and Assignments

Assignment/Exam	Total Pts	% of Grade
Syllabus Quiz	10	3.5%
6 Reading Responses (10 points each)	60	19.3%
6 Discussion Board Posts & Responses (10 points each)	60	19.3%
Writing Assignment #1	60	19.3%
Writing Assignment #2	60	19.3%
Final Writing Assignment #3	60	19.3%
<b>Total Points Possible</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>100%</b>

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica (this equates to three hours per unit per week, or 9 hours per week for a 3 unit course). Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

Final grades for the course will be assigned on basis of the following. **Refer to the course schedule located on Canvas for the most current due dates, as these may change after the posting of this syllabus.** Please note that these are summary descriptions. Detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted on the course site.

### 1. Syllabus Quiz (10 points, 3.5% of final grade)

Each student is required to read through this syllabus and complete a syllabus quiz (located on Canvas) before proceeding with the course material. You must receive an 80% or higher and you can repeat the quiz until you reach it up until the quiz due date.

### 2. Reading Responses (60 points total, ~20% of final grade)

Each module will have one reading response (6 total, 10 points each). Reading Response are short-answer quizzes. For each module, you will be given one short prompt. You will write one short paragraph (4-5 sentences). You must show engagement with the readings or lectures (with citations) to get full credit. You will be asked to critically think about materials from the readings and lectures, so you'll need to have thought about the course materials to pass. Reading Responses are graded pass/fail.

### 3. Discussion Posts (60 points total, ~20% of final grade)

In response to each module's prompt (6 total), students will make one Discussion Post (50-100 words). Each student's post should have an interesting or provocative title so that others will want to read and respond to the post. Each post is worth 6 points. Posts are graded on a pass/fail basis. To pass, posts must (1) be at least 50-100 words, (2) have an interesting or provocative title, and (3) be relevant to the discussion topic.

Within 24 hours of the post deadline, students must post a response to two other classmates' initial post that are no more than 50 words and engage in critical or substantive ways with the initial post (e.g., exemplar, critique, question). Each response is worth 2 points (4 points total). These responses are graded on a pass/fail basis. To pass and earn full points responses must (1) adhere to the word limit and (2) engage critically or substantively with the initial post it is responding to.

#### **4. Assignments (~60% of final grade)**

There will be three hands-on activities that require students to conduct guided independent research and analysis in ways that apply the materials and concepts we are studying. Below are examples of potential assignment prompts. The final assignment prompts will be posted on the course Canvas site. Students will submit all course assignments via a plagiarism checker on Canvas.

##### **Assignment 1: Analysis of a Ritual Meal in Your Family**

In this assignment, you are asked to reflect on and analyze a family ritual meal in which you participated from an anthropological perspective. You may choose any major ritual meal to analyze, EXCEPT for Thanksgiving. You might choose a meal that your family prepares to signify a religious holiday, a birthday or coming of age celebration, a routine weekly family get-together, or any other special meal event or occasion where people cue together to mark an event.

##### **Assignment 2: Interviews & Analysis of Perceptions of Healthy Eating**

The purpose of this assignment is to give you hands-on experience in conducting interviews focused on food and culture in the same way that a cultural anthropologist would do. You will interview three people on their perceptions of what constitutes healthy eating. You will transcribe the interviews, analyze them thematically, and write up your results of the analysis, reflecting on potential follow-up research questions and potential explanations for your findings based on your interviewees knowledge, positionality, and/or other relevant factors.

##### **(Final) Assignment 3: Communicating the Ethical Complexities of Food to a Popular Audience**

For this assignment, you will create a 1,000-1,500 word blog post suitable for public viewing that address a complex ethical issue related to food and culture. Your blog post must present an argument from at least two sides that takes into account different perspectives on the question. A blog post is an accessible piece of writing (not an academic piece of writing!). Your post must present different perspectives, use evidence, and engage and convince the reader. You are welcome to bring in personal experiences or perspectives as a tool to engage the reader, but the argument you make must be balanced and supported by a wider array of evidence (e.g., scientific study or ethnographic evidence). Potential debates that students may wish to engage with include, "Should we stop eating meat?," "Should we start eating insects?," "Should GMOs be banned?,"

“Which is better to drink: bottled or tap water?” To address these questions, students will need to conduct independent research.

### **Extra Credit**

There is no extra credit in this course.

### **Incompletes**

A mark of "I" (incomplete) is given by the instructor when you have completed most of the course (at least 80% of coursework) and are otherwise doing acceptable work (have a passing grade) but are unable to complete the course because of illness or other conditions beyond your control. You are required to arrange with the instructor for the completion of the course requirements.

### **Late Assignments**

Students are responsible for knowing the course due dates (listed on course schedule located on Canvas), and for turning work in on time.

- If you need an accommodation/extension on course assignments for religious practices, please follow the [university procedure](#) to request an accommodation.
- If you have a personal or medical reason for requesting an extension on an activity or assignment, you must obtain written consent from the instructor in advance of the assignment due date. Requests for excuses must be written as an email to the instructor and approval must be obtained by an email reply. If you have a personal or medical emergency that precludes you from contacting the instructor in advance of the assignment due date, contact the instructor to discuss your situation as soon as you are able to.
- Discussion posts and Reading responses that are submitted late without instructor approval will not be accepted.
- Written assignments will be accepted up to 5 days late (including weekends) and will be docked 10% points (i.e. one letter grade) for each day that they are late on top of assigned grade. Students can request an extension without penalty only in cases of medical or personal emergencies/circumstances approved by the instructor.

*Please note:* If there is a system-wide outage when an assignment is due you will not be punished for not turning it in on time, but will be required to turn it in by the newly stated day and time.

### **Discussions**

This course will rely heavily upon your thoughts and insights as we complete discussions via the online discussion boards

- Respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own. When you disagree, challenge or critique the idea, not the person.
- Listen/read carefully to what others are saying/writing even when you disagree. Comments that you make (asking for clarification, sharing critiques, expanding on a point, etc.) should reflect that you have paid attention to the person's comments.
- Support your statements. Use evidence and provide a rationale for your points.

- Recognize that we are all still learning. Be willing to change your perspective, and make space for others to do the same.

### University Policies Applicable to All SJSU Courses

Please go to <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo/> to review university policies, procedures, and resources that are applicable to all SJSU courses

### Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Below is the anticipated course schedule. This schedule is subject to change in order to meet the goals of the course, and students should be sure to regularly check the course Canvas site and their SJSU email accounts for updates.

Week	Course Module	Activities	Due Date (submit on Canvas; all assignments and activities due at 11:59 pm on the due date)
0 1/27-1/29	<b>Course Introduction</b> Read the syllabus, familiarize yourself with the course platform	Syllabus Quiz	<b>Mon. Feb 1</b>
1 2/1	<b>Module 1 – An Appetizer: Studying Food &amp; Culture</b> <i>Part 1: Defining Food, Defining Culture</i>	Module 1 Discussion post Module 1 Discussion Response	<b>Thu. Feb 11</b> <b>Fri. Feb 12</b>
2 2/8	<b>Module 1 – An Appetizer: Studying Food &amp; Culture</b> <i>Part 2: Theoretical &amp; Methodological Approaches</i>	Module 1 Reading Response	<b>Fri. Feb 12</b>
3 2/15	<b>Module 2 – Food, Identity, &amp; Society</b> <i>Part 1 – Food &amp; Identity</i>	Module 2 Discussion post Module 2 Discussion Response	<b>Thu. Feb 25</b> <b>Fri. Feb 26</b>
4 2/22	<b>Module 2 – Food, Identity, &amp; Society</b> <i>Part 2 – Food, Race, &amp; the Body</i>	Module 2 Reading Response	<b>Fri. Feb 26</b>
5 3/1	<b><u>Writing Assignment #1</u></b>		<b>Fri. March 5</b>
6 3/8	<b>Module 3 – Food, Culture, &amp; Health</b> <i>Part 1 – Food &amp; Illness</i>	Module 3 Discussion post Module 3 Discussion Response	<b>Thu. March 18</b> <b>Fri. March 19</b>
7 3/15	<b>Module 3 – Food, Culture, &amp; Health</b> <i>Part 2 – Food &amp; Health</i>	Module 3 Reading Response	<b>Fri. March 19</b>
8 3/22	<b>Module 4 – Food, Human Evolution, and Biocultural Implications</b> <i>Part 1 – Biology &amp; Culture</i>		

9 3/29	<b>SPRING BREAK – NO COURSEWORK</b>		
10 4/5	<b>Module 4 – Food, Human Evolution, and Biocultural Implications</b> <i>Part 2 – Culture &amp; Biology</i>	Module 4 Discussion post Module 4 Discussion Response Module 4 Reading Response	<b>Thur. April 8</b> <b>Fri. April 9</b> <b>Fri. April 9</b>
11 4/12	<b><u>Writing Assignment # 2</u></b>		<b>Fri. April 16</b>
12 4/19	<b>Module 5 – Changing Food Systems</b> <i>Part 1 – Revolutions</i>	Module 5 Discussion post Module 5 Discussion Response	<b>Thu. April 29</b> <b>Fri. April 30</b>
13 4/26	<b>Module 5 – Changing Food Systems</b> <i>Part 2 – Globalizations</i>	Module 5 Reading Response	<b>Fri. April 30</b>
14 5/3	<b>Module 6 – Food &amp; Power</b> <i>Part 1 – Theories of Power &amp; Implications for Food Systems</i>	Module 6 Discussion post Module 6 Discussion Response	<b>Thu. May 13</b> <b>Fri. May 14</b>
15 5/10	<b>Module 6 – Food &amp; Power</b> <i>Part 2 – Adaptions &amp; Responses from below</i>	Module 6 Reading Response	<b>Fri. May 14</b>
16 5/17	<b><u>Final Writing Assignment #3</u></b>		<b>Fri. May 21</b>