

**OSLEP COURSE:
FOOD AND CULTURE – EXPLORATIONS OF PLACE
SYLLABUS**

Course Description: This course will use discursive and kinesthetic approaches in order to understand the complex, varied, and important ways culture makes food and food makes culture. Culture can be defined as the sum of our every day decisions, all the common sense beliefs and actions that shape how we eat, dress, pray, learn and more. Thus if we want to understand “culture,” we need to *experience* and *participate* in such every day activities. In this class, farming, cooking and eating will be our focus - universal enterprises yet unbelievably varied and complex in what happens around the globe.

For this intensive OSLEP course our focus will be the power of *place* as a mediator between food and culture. Some of the broad questions we will consider include the following: How does place defined as a natural environment inform foodways? How does affinity to a certain place get expressed in farming and cooking practices? How can we understand the importance of place to identity in a nation characterized by migration and cultural pluralism? How important is place (either as a defined geography or prescribed identity) for contemporary farming, cooking and eating? What is the future of food in place given our global food system?

Course Evaluation and Expectations:

I expect professional standards of behavior in the classroom. Cell phones and pagers should be turned off. Chronic tardiness is not acceptable. You are expected to come to lab and class every week, and if you are sick you need to contact me directly.

I expect participation from every student. The class is organized to promote dialogue and interaction. When you are in class and in lab you need to participate. I will be following all the lab teams to make sure there is full participation. Seize the day. I also intend to have conversations during class and will call on people during discussions as well.

All readings must be read completely before class. I will be leading class discussions and organizing in-class activities as much or more than I will be presenting lectures. We will have much better and more meaningful discussions if everyone comes in prepared. If you don't understand a reading, bring in a list of questions – we can use them to begin our discussions.

All writing assignments should be typed and submitted in 12 point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with 1” margins.

All assignments need to satisfy the standards of academic integrity.

Plagiarism (not attributing other people's ideas, arguments or phrases properly) and *cheating* will result in a failing grade.

Assessment:

Class Participation:

Journal Reflections:

Students will post reflections on class discussions, field trips, cooking labs, etc. every night of the course.

Synthesis Essays:

Students will write one reflective essay and one synthesis/analysis essay. The reflective essay will be due on the first day of the course and will be used to build the foundation for the course. The second essay will be due after the course is over and will synthesize readings, discussions, field trips and other experiences.

Write two essays:

- First essay combines personal reflections about your own relationship to food, culture and place. You will be asked to find a story or a primary document (recipe, cookbook, etc.) from your own family and to consider your own farming, cooking and eating habits. (3-4 pages)
- Second essay synthesizes learning of food, culture and place and contemplates universal aspects vs. cultural specifics. (8-12 pages)

Required Readings:

The Taste of Place: A Cultural Journey into Terroir by Amy Trubek

Coming Home to Eat by Gary Paul Nabhan

Fast Food Nation by Eric Schlosser

Food Culture in France by Julia Abramson

Assorted readings

Day One - Monday:

9am-noon

Introductions

Small group discussions on Oklahoma food culture based on personal essays

Presentations and discussion

Noon-1pm Lunch of Oklahoma foods

1:30-4 Food, cooking and culture: lecture and discussion

Day Two - Tuesday:

9am-2pm

Food and Place: the case of France

Prepare French lunch based on cuisine du terroir

Lunch

2:30-5pm

Afternoon discussion: place and cultural identity, place and agrarian life, locale, region and nation

Day Three - Wednesday:

9am-1pm

Food and Place: the link between farming, cooking and eating

Visit to Farmers market

Prepare lunch

Exploration of ingredients and place

2p-5pm

Demonstration Garden tour

Health food store and grocery store tour

Day Four -Thursday:

9am-1pm

Place and Migration: American West and Southwest

Native American foodways: demonstration and discussion

Native American lunch

1pm-7pm

Field trip to Mexican market

Dinner at a Mexican restaurant

Day Five- Friday:

9am-1pm

The relevance of place in a global food system?

Taste, discernment and fast food: sensory experiences

Lunch at fast food restaurant

Wrap up discussion