

GE2239: FOOD: CULTURE, SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Food: Culture, Science and Society

Subject Code

GE - Gateway Education

Course Number

2239

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

GE Area (Primary)

Area 2 - Study of Societies, Social and Business Organisations

GE Area (Secondary)

Area 3 - Science and Technology

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details**Abstract**

This course aims to develop students' critical understanding of food. Food is not just what we eat, it also involves a culture which determines what we eat or not eat, how we eat and how much we eat, and shapes our general ways of life. While the Chinese cannot dispense with pork in their daily meals, the Muslims see pork as profaning and dirty. Food culture entails a feast of values and representations that signify a society's identity, and a plethora of taboos that draw boundaries. Food also entails power that assists both the spread and elimination of food and made certain food more available and valuable than the others. The course will strengthen students' understanding of food culture and food science in relations to food safety and health issues. It will bring them on a food journey that raises their awareness of problematic food production and consumption, and their impacts on human health and the environment.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Demonstrate understanding of different foodways, food symbolism, and their relationships with social identity.	10	x	x	x
2	Evaluate basic concepts in food science involving food nutrients and how foodways affect nutrient intake and health.	20	x	x	x
3	Analyse the processes of food globalization and its effects on social relationships, identity, and health.	20		x	x
4	Identify and distinguish the various impacts of modern food production regarding ecological problems, food safety, health issues, and communicate these messages to others.	20		x	x
5	Develop a critical awareness of the impacts of modern food production and food consumption on the society and the environment and write critiques on these issues.	20		x	x
6	Demonstrate innovative foodways for promoting responsible food consumption	10	x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

	LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Lectures and class discussions	Lectures/seminars, reading, class discussions	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
2	Food films, documentaries and discussions	Film & documentary screening and discussion	3, 4, 5	
3	Food journals	Creative & reflective assignments	2, 3, 4, 5	
4	Field trips	Visit to farms and food related organizations	5, 6	
5	Research project	Research and reflections	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	

Additional Information for LTAs

nil

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class participation, discussion, debate & reflective writing	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	30	-	Yes
2	Food journals	2, 3, 4, 6	30	-	No
3	Research project	2, 3, 4, 5, 6	40	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class participation, discussions, debates and reflective writing

Criterion

Active participation and good understanding of class material

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Evidence of active participation and excellent conceptual and critical understanding of class materials and the key issues and debates concerning food relations.

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of sufficient participation and understanding of class materials and the key issues and debates concerning food relations.

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited participation and understanding of class materials

Marginal (D)

Little effort in demonstrating participation and understanding of class material

Failure (F)

No effort in demonstrating participation and understanding of class material

Assessment Task

Food journals

Criterion

Good and reflective writing

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Evidence of excellent conceptual and critical understanding of the key issues and debates concerning food, health, and environment

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of sufficient conceptual and critical understanding of the key issues and debates concerning food, health, and environment

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited understanding of class materials and food relations

Marginal (D)

Marginal understanding of class materials and food relations

Failure (F)

Cannot demonstrate understanding of class material and food issues

Assessment Task

Research project

Criterion

Research effort, clear arguments, and good reflexivity

Excellent (A+, A, A-)

Evidence of abundant research effort, excellent application of concepts, and critical understanding of the key issues and debates concerning food relations

Good (B+, B, B-)

Evidence of sufficient research effort, good application of concepts and critical understanding of the key issues and debates concerning food relations

Fair (C+, C, C-)

Limited understanding of class materials and food relations

Marginal (D)

Marginal understanding of class materials and food relations

Failure (F)

Cannot demonstrate understanding of class materials and food issues

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Classes	Topic
1	Food culture and food science
2	Food memory and social identity
3	Food taboos: honey or poison?
4	Food, nutrients, and health
5	Food and globalization
6	Food and power
7	Workshop – Inventing Food, Taste and Gastronomy
8	Food crisis: hunger and famine
9	Food production: the global food system
10	Food production in China
11	Site visit
12	Food and ecology
13	Food future

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Nil

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Allison, Anne. 2008. 'Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch-box as Ideological State Apparatus.' In <i>Food and Culture: A Reader</i> (2nd ed.), ed., Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. New York: Routledge, pp. 221–39
2	Appadurai, Arjun. 2008. 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India.' In <i>Food and Culture: A Reader</i> (2nd ed.), ed., Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik. New York: Routledge, pp. 289–307.
3	Chang, K.C., ed. 1977. <i>Food in Chinese Culture: Anthropological and Historical Perspectives</i> . New Haven: Yale University Press.
4	Counihan, Carole and Penny Van Esterik, eds, (2008) <i>Food and culture: a reader</i> . New York: Routledge.
5	Douglas, Mary, ed. 1984. <i>Food in the Social Order: Studies of Food and Festivities in Three American Communities</i> . New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
6	Fieldhouse, Paul. 1995. <i>Food and Nutrition: Customs and Culture</i> . New York: Chapman & Hall.
7	Dreze, Jean and Amartya Sen. 1989. <i>Hunger and public action</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.
8	Gabbacia, D. 1998. <i>We Are What We Eat: Ethnic Food and the Making of Americans</i> . Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
9	Holtzman, Jon D. 2006. 'Food and Memory.' <i>Annual Review of Anthropology</i> 35: 361–37.
10	Johnston, Francis E., ed. 1987. <i>Nutritional anthropology</i> . New York: A.R. Liss.
11	Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1969. <i>The Raw and the Cooked</i> (translated by John and Doreen Weightman). New York: Harper & Row.
12	Mintz, Sidney W. 1985. <i>Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History</i> . New York: Penguin.
13	Nestle, Marion. 2002. <i>Food politics: how the food industry influences nutrition and health</i> . Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press.
14	Patel, Raj. 2008. <i>Stuffed and starved: markets, power and the hidden battle for the world food system</i> . London: Portobello.
15	Pawlick, Thomas. 2006. <i>The end of food</i> . Vancouver, B.C.: Greystone Books.

16	Phillips, Lynne. 2006. 'Food and Globalization,' Annual Review of Anthropology 35: 37–57.
17	Pottier, Johan. 1999. Anthropology of food: the social dynamics of food security. Cambridge ; Polity Press
18	Scholliers, Peter, ed. 2001. Food, Drink and Identity: Cooking, Eating and Drinking in Europe Since the Middle Ages. Oxford: Berg.
19	Sutton, David E. 2001. Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory. New York: Berg.
20	Thomas, Mandy. 2004. "Transitions in Taste in Vietnam and the Diaspora." Australian Journal of Anthropology 15 (1): 54–67.
21	Watson, James L. and Melissa L. Caldwell, eds, (2005) The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader. Malden, MA: Blackwell.
22	Weis, Anthony. 2007. The Global Food Economy: The Battle for the Future of Farming. London: Zed Books.
23	Wolke, Robert. 2002. What Einstein Told His Cook: Kitchen Science Explained. W. W. New York: Norton & Company.
24	Wu, David, and Sidney C.H. Cheung, eds. 2002. The Globalization of Chinese Food. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
25	Online Resources: http://www.fao.org/
26	Online Resources: http://beta.irri.org/index.php/Home/Welcome/Frontpage.htm

Annex (for GE courses only)

A. Please specify the Gateway Education Programme Intended Learning Outcomes (PILOs) that the course is aligned to and relate them to the CILOs stated in Part II, Section 2 of this form:

Please indicate which CILO(s) is/are related to this PILO, if any (can be more than one CILOs in each PILO)

PILO 1: Demonstrate the capacity for self-directed learning

6

PILO 2: Explain the basic methodologies and techniques of inquiry of the arts and humanities, social sciences, business, and science and technology

3

PILO 3: Demonstrate critical thinking skills

1

PILO 4: Interpret information and numerical data

2

PILO 5: Produce structured, well-organised and fluent text

6

PILO 6: Demonstrate effective oral communication skills

6

PILO 7: Demonstrate an ability to work effectively in a team

6

PILO 8: Recognise important characteristics of their own culture(s) and at least one other culture, and their impact on global issues

4

PILO 9: Value ethical and socially responsible actions

6

PILO 10: Demonstrate the attitude and/or ability to accomplish discovery and/or innovation

5

B. Please select an assessment task for collecting evidence of student achievement for quality assurance purposes. Please retain at least one sample of student achievement across a period of three years.

Selected Assessment Task

Research report