

# Food and Culture SOCI/ANTH 252

Department of Sociology/Anthropology  
Concordia University  
Fall 2022

## Course Information

**Professor:** Erik Chevrier

**Day/Time:** Monday 2:45 – 5:30 PM

**E-mail:** [foodandculture@erikchevrier.ca](mailto:foodandculture@erikchevrier.ca)

**Website:** [www.erikchevrier.ca](http://www.erikchevrier.ca)

**Office Hours:** Monday 5:45 – 7:00 PM (by request)

**Classroom:** FG B050 SGW

## Important Dates

Last day to register:	<b>Monday, September 19, 2022</b>
Last day to withdraw (refund):	<b>Monday, September 19, 2022</b>
Last day to discontinue (no refund):	<b>Thursday, December 8, 2022</b>
Last day of in-class testing:	<b>Wednesday, November 30, 2022</b>
Final exams:	<b>December 9-22, 2022</b>
<b>Travel arrangements should not be made prior to the posting of the final Exam Schedule.</b>	

## Course Description:

Food is an integral part of cultural studies. It is central to many cultural rituals, like feasts and festivals; it has been a catalyst for global resistance to capitalism, like in the food sovereignty movement; it is embedded with a variety of beliefs and customs, like religious diets (i.e. Kosher and Halal); it is a uniting force for the development of a social economy, like in the development of food cooperatives; it has also been a central theme in countless cultural texts, films and literature; food helps us form an understanding of ourselves and the cultures we are part of, most importantly, it is what sustains us.

In this course, we will explore themes related to food and culture including: meaning and practice, representation and identity, global and local food production and food politics. We will focus on the political economy of food by examining how food is produced, transformed, distributed, consumed, and how food waste is managed in different areas of the world. We will take a critical perspective to analyze multinational food corporations, like Bayer, by looking at the consequences of large-scale industrialized farming, monoculture, and the privatization of genetics. These

consequences include the use of GMOs and the loss of biodiversity; reliance on fossil fuels and its contribution to climate change; use of glyphosate and the accompanying health effects; seed patents and loss of food sovereignty; use of natural resources and the depletion of water and food supplies; among others.

We will also explore what certain cultures are doing to prevent these negative consequences. For example, we will look at the slow food movement coming out of Italy and Ireland as a way of re-localizing food production, processing and consumption – a.k.a. the farm-to-plate movement; we will examine the food sovereignty movement coming out of Mexico at La Via Campesina assembly in 1996 – which is now being popularized globally; we will learn about the Detroit Black Community Food Security Network and their initiative to reclaim food sovereignty, food justice and eliminate food insecurity; we will also look at sustainable production, like seed saving, indigenous practices, permaculture, rooftop gardening, and organic farming. Moreover, we will read about and discuss a variety of beliefs and customs regarding food by addressing the differences in cultural symbolism of plants and animals in different parts of the world.

In this course, we will partake in the ‘practice’ of food. Students will perform various engaging activities that encourage them to connect with food production, transformation and waste management. Students will write about and discuss the cultural significance, meaning and symbolism of these food practices. We will employ traditions of critical self-reflection and auto-ethnography. Students will examine their personal involvement in industrial and alternative food systems.

An important focus of this course is enhancing local food systems through community engagement (community service learning). Students will participate with community food projects to learn from those who work to improve micro and macro foodscapes. Not only will students learn to be critical of the global food system, they will also perform action-research to make improvements locally (and internationally via the internet if desired). Students will learn firsthand about ways to reduce food insecurity, advocate for food justice and develop food sovereign communities.

## Course Readings:

Students are expected to complete **ALL** the designated readings and watch **ALL** of the assigned videos **BEFORE EACH CLASS**. Students are also expected to attend **ALL** classes, and participate in class discussions.

The required readings are available at the Concordia Library, and online via the links below.

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P, Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

[Brulotte, R., Di Giovine, M. A. \(2016\) Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage, Routledge.](#)

The power-point **lecture notes** will be posted on the course website before each class.

## Recommended Readings:

Oppenlander, R. (2013) Food Choices and Sustainability: Why Buying Local, Eating Less Meat, and Taking Baby Steps Won't Work, Langdon Street Press.

Sumner, J. (2016) Learning, Food, and Sustainability: Sites for Resistance and Change, Palgrave MacMillan.

Koc, M., Sumner, J., & Winson, A. (2017) Critical Perspectives in Food Studies, Second Edition, Oxford University Press.

Holt-Gimenez, E. (2017) A Foodie's Guide to Capitalism: Understanding the Political Economy of What We Eat, Monthly Review Press, New York.

URLs and other electronic sources may be posted on this webpage from time to time. Please visit weekly to get updates.

## Course Format:

This course will be given in-person. I will use a variety of pedagogical styles including lectures, discussions, guest speakers (possibly), field trips (maybe), community service learning and/or experiential learning. Students are expected to read the required weekly texts before coming to class. Students will engage with each other through interactive activities, discussions and by talking with people who work with food – production, transformation, distribution, and waste management.

## Extraordinary Circumstances:

In the event of extraordinary circumstances and pursuant to the [Academic Regulations](#) the University may modify the delivery, content, structure, forum, location and/or evaluation scheme. In the event of such extraordinary circumstances, students will be informed of the changes.

## Course Evaluation:

Assignments	Due Date	Grade Weight
Participation	Ongoing	5
Blog 1 – Food Meaning and Practice	October 24	30

Blog 2 – Edible Identities	November 21	30
Community-Service Learning Proposal	October 17	10
Community-Service Learning Project	December 8	25
Total		100%

## Course Assignments:

**Participation:** The participation grade is based on attendance, involvement in discussions, participation in classroom activities and supplemental tasks (i.e. you will grow a plant from seed and will inform classmates about your experience with the plant). Attending every class does not guarantee that you get an A for participation, you must also demonstrate that you completed the readings and supplemental tasks.

**Blog Posts:** Students will write two blogs of about 600 – 1000 words about the practice and meaning of food, and edible identities. Although this is a blog, the information conveyed must come from research, not conjecture. In addition, the blog must contain at least eight reliable, valid, credible sources and references to the course readings. Students with production skills can produce a video or a podcast instead of a blog; however, this must also be approved by me (Erik Chevrier).

**Community Service-Learning Project:** The objective of this assignment is to give students hands-on experiential-learning about transformative food movements. Students will perform an action-research project by creating a food project and/or participating with an already existing community food initiative or campaign at Concordia University or in the community at large. Students will participate in a group and submit the report as a group. Students will be evaluated based on the depth of their involvement with the project, clearly reporting the project, class updates about the project's progress, ability to work together as a cohesive team and an oral presentation of the project.

Students must form a group in class; however, they may choose to work with a group that already exists and/or create something with like-minded people outside the classroom. In class, students will form clusters and contribute to the project based on their area of expertise. For example, someone with great research skills could get involved with the research portion of the project, someone with media skills can build media infrastructure, someone with great interpersonal communication skills can be the mobilizer, among other tasks. Students will be evaluated based on the depth of their involvement with the project, their deliverables, clearly reporting their contribution to the project, an oral presentation summarizing their role in the project while linking the project to the course material.

**Action Research Project Proposal:** Students will write a proposal for the action-research project they want to partake in. Students may participate in a group project

and submit the proposal as a group. Students must (1) identify a food group to participate with or a food project to create, (2) outline a specific timeline for the project, (3) summarize their role in the project, (4) describe how they intend to write their final report, (5) link the topic to class readings and other food issues.

## Letter Grade Equivalency:

Your numerical grades will be converted to letter grades as follows:

A+	(95 – 100%)	B+	(80 – 84.9%)	C+	(67 – 69.9%)	D+	(57– 59.9%)
A	(90 – 94.9%)	B	(75 – 79.9%)	C	(63 – 66.9%)	D	(53 – 56.9%)
A-	(85 – 89.9%)	B-	(70 – 74.9%)	C-	(60 – 62.9%)	D-	(50 – 52.9%)
F	< 50%						

## Course Schedule:

This is a **TENTATIVE** schedule and is subject to change. Be sure to consult the course website regularly to be aware of any changes.

### **September 19 – Introduction to Food and Culture Course**

**Activity Theme: Food Production – Growing Food (Seedlings)**

### **September 26 – Introduction to Food and Culture**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Introduction – Continuing the Saliency of Food and Culture (p. 1 – 12)

[Brulotte, R., Di Giovine, M. A. \(2016\) Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage, Routledge.](#)

Introduction – Introduction: Food and Foodways as Cultural Heritage (p. 1 – 28)

**Activity Theme: Food Production – Growing Food (Plant Care)**

### **October 12 (Wednesday) – Food Meaning and Practice**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 1 – Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption (p. 13 – 21)

Chapter 2 – The Culinary Triangle (p. 21 – 28)

Chapter 3 – Deciphering a Meal (p 29 – 47)

**Activity Theme: Starting a Sourdough**

### **October 17 – Food Meaning and Practice**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 6 – Cooking Skills, the Senses, and Memory: The Fate of Practical Knowledge (p. 88 – 109)

Chapter 7 – Race, Place and Taste: Making Identities Through Sensory Experience in Ecuador (p. 110 – 126)

Chapter 8 – The Raw and the Rotten: Punk Cuisine (p. 127 – 140)

**Activity Theme: Making Bread**

### **October 24 – Representation and Identity**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 9 – Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste (p. 141 – 150)

Chapter 10 – The Nourishing Arts (p. 151 – 162)

Chapter 11 – Towards Queering Food Studies: Foodways, Heteronormativity and Hungry Women in Chicana Lesbian Writing (p. 163 – 176)

**Activity Theme: Food Transformation (Preservation – Fermentation)**

### **October 31 – Representation and Identity**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 12 – A Way Outa No Way: Eating Problems Among African-American, Latina, and White Women (p. 177 – 190)

Chapter 14 – I Haven't Eaten If I don't Have My Soup and Fufu: Cultural Preservation Through Food and Foodways Among Ghanaian Migrants in the United States (p. 205 – 220)

Chapter 15 – The Signifying Dish: Autobiography and History in Two Black Women's Cookbooks (p. 221 – 235)

**Activity Theme: Food Transformation (Preservation – Canning)**

### **November 7 – Edible Identities**

[Brulotte, R., Di Giovine, M. A. \(2016\) Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 1 – Re-Inventing a Tradition of Intervention: Entrepreneurialism as Heritage in American Artisan Cheesemaking (p. 29 – 38)

Chapter 4 – Edible Authenticities: Heirloom Vegetables and Culinary Heritage in Kyoto, Japan (p. 67 – 76)

Chapter 6 – Take the Chicken Out of the Box: Demystifying the Sameness of African American Culinary Heritage in the U.S. (p. 93 – 108)

Chapter 8 – Hallucinating the Slovenian Way: The Myth of Salamander Brandy, an Indigenous Slovenian Psychedelic Drug (p. 125 – 140)

### **November 14 – Edible Identities**

[Brulotte, R., Di Giovine, M. A. \(2016\) Edible Identities: Food as Cultural Heritage, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 9 – Haute Traditional Cuisines: How UNESCO's List of Intangible Heritage Links the Cosmopolitan to the Local (p. 141 – 158)

Chapter 11 – French Chocolate as Intangible Cultural Heritage (p. 175 – 184)  
Chapter 13 – The Mexican and Transnational Lives of Corn: Technological, Political, Edible Object (p. 201 – 218)  
Chapter 14 – Cultural Heritage in Food Activism: Local and Global Tensions (p. 219 – 230)

**Activity Theme: Food distribution (Farmers Markets)**

### **November 21 – Global and Local Production**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 18 – Industrial Food: Towards the Development of a World Cuisine (p. 263 – 282)

Chapter 19 – Remaking Traditions: How We Eat, What We Eat and the Changing Political Economy of Food (p. 283 – 299)

Chapter 21 – On the Move for Food: Three Women Behind the Tomatoes Journey (312 – 322)

**Activity Theme: Urban Agriculture**

### **November 28 – Global and Local Production**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 24 – Jolly Dogs and McSpaghetti: Anthropological Reflections on Global/Local Fast-Food Competition in the Philippines (p. 351 – 362)

Chapter 25 – Too Hot to Handle: Food, Empire, and Race in Thai Los Angeles (p. 363 – 384)

Chapter 26 – Old Stock Tamales and Migrant Tacos: Taste, Authenticity and the Naturalization of Mexican Food (p. 385 – 400)

**Activity Theme: Composting**

### **December 5 – Food Politics**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 28 – Re-Purposing the Master's Tools: The Open Source Seed Initiative and the Struggle for Seed Sovereignty (p. 414 – 438)

Chapter 29 – Preface to the Tenth Anniversary Edition of Food Politics (p. 439 – 442)

Chapter 30 – The Disappearance of Hunger in America (p. 443 – 449)

**Activity Theme: Alternative Food Practices**

### **December 8 (Wednesday) – Food Politics**

[Counihan, C., Van Esterik, P., Julier, A. \(2019\) Food and Culture: A Reader, 4th edition, Routledge.](#)

Chapter 33 – Expanding Access to Alternatives: Building Farmers' Markets in Low-Income Communities (p. 480 – 492)

Chapter 34 – Slow Food and the Politics of Virtuous Globalization (p. 493 – 509)

**Activity Theme: Cooking**

## Late Assignment Policy:

Unless you are given permission in advance, late assignments will not be accepted without adequate documentation of medical or personal emergencies. All assignments must be submitted in hard copy on the due date. Assignments that are received electronically will have 30% deducted from the grade of the assignment.

## List of Useful Resources:

Counselling and Psychological Services: <http://concordia.ca/students/counselling-life-skills>

Concordia Library Citation and Style Guides: <http://library.concordia.ca/help/howto/citations>

Student Success Centre: <http://concordia.ca/students/success>

Health Services: <http://concordia.ca/students/health>

Financial Aid and Awards: <http://concordia.ca/offices/faao>

HOJO (Off Campus Housing and Job Bank): <http://csu.qc.ca/hojo>

Academic Integrity: <http://concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity>

Access Centre for Students with Disabilities: <http://concordia.ca/offices/acsd>

CSU Advocacy Centre: <http://csu.qc.ca/advocacy>

Dean of Students Office: <http://concordia.ca/offices/dean-students>

International Students Office: <http://concordia.ca/students/international>

Student Hub: <http://concordia.ca/students>

Sexual Assault Resource Centre: <http://concordia.ca/students/sexual-assault.html>

Indigenous Directions: <http://concordia.ca/about/indigenous.html>

## Rights and Responsibilities:

**Academic Integrity:** “The Academic Code of Conduct sets out for students, instructors and administrators both the process and the expectations involved when a charge of academic misconduct occurs. The regulations are presented within the



context of an academic community which seeks to support student learning at Concordia University.” (From Article 1 of the Academic Code of Conduct). Full text:

<http://www.concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity/offences.html>

**Plagiarism:** The most common offense under the Academic Code of Conduct is plagiarism, which the Code defines as “the presentation of the work of another person as one’s own or without proper acknowledgement.” This includes material copied word for word from books, journals, Internet sites, professor’s course notes, etc. It refers to material that is paraphrased but closely resembles the original source. It also includes for example the work of a fellow student, an answer on a quiz, data for a lab report, a paper or assignment completed by another student. It might be a paper purchased from any source. Plagiarism does not refer to words alone –it can refer to copying images, graphs, tables and ideas. “Presentation” is not limited to written work. It includes oral presentations, computer assignment and artistic works. Finally, if you translate the work of another person into any other language and do not cite the source, this is also plagiarism. **In Simple Words: Do not copy, paraphrase or translate anything from anywhere without saying where you obtained it!** Source: Academic Integrity

Website: <http://concordia.ca/students/academic-integrity>

**Disabilities:** The University’s commitment to providing equal educational opportunities to all students includes students with disabilities. To demonstrate full respect for the academic capacities and potential of students with disabilities, the University seeks to remove attitudinal and physical barriers that may hinder or prevent qualified students with disabilities from participating fully in University life. Please see the instructor during the first class if you feel you require assistance.

For more information please visit <http://concordia.ca/offices/acsd>

**Safe Space Classroom:** Virtual classrooms are considered ‘safe space virtual classrooms’. In order to create a climate for open and honest dialogue and to encourage the broadest range of viewpoints, it is important for class participants to treat each other with respect. Name-calling, accusations, verbal attacks, sarcasm, and other negative exchanges are counter-productive to successful teaching and learning. The purpose of class discussions is to generate greater understanding about different topics. The expression of the broadest range of ideas, including dissenting views, helps to accomplish this goal. However, in expressing viewpoints, students should try to raise questions and comments in ways that will promote learning, rather than defensiveness and feelings of conflict in other students. Thus, questions and comments should be asked or stated in such a way that will promote greater insight into the awareness of topics as opposed to anger and conflict. The purpose of dialogue and discussion is not to reach a consensus, nor to convince each other of different viewpoints. Rather, the purpose of dialogue in the classroom is to reach higher levels of learning by examining different viewpoints and opinions with respect and civility.

## **Territorial Acknowledgement:**

*I acknowledge that Concordia University is located on unceded Indigenous lands. The Kanien'kehá:ka Nation is recognized as the custodians of the lands and waters on which we gather today. Tiohtiá:ke/Montreal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations. Today, it is home to a diverse population of Indigenous and other peoples. We respect the continued connections with the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous and other peoples within the Montreal community. (Indigenous Directions Leadership Group, Feb. 16, 2017)*