English 3300/ Introduction to Literary Studies:
Consuming Food in Words
Spring 2023
Mondays & Wednesdays 3:00 to 4:20
Hudspeth 300
Dr. Abarca

Office Hours:
Mondays & Wednesdays from 1:30 to 2:30. With previous arrangements, I could see a student at a different time. Hudspeth 307

Office Phone: (915) 747-6249

COURSE GOALS:
The central focus of this course is to learn to analyze narratives (stories) through the application of different theoretical perspectives. The narrative forms study throughout the semester vary from poetry, essays, sections of novels and memoirs to full length novels and memoirs, films and oral stories—they all share connecting theme: Food. Why food? First of all, it is a topic that I have critically analyzed and written about for quite a few years now. Second, food studies as the anchor of literary analysis is currently experiencing a boom. Third, and most importantly, the study of food is one that speaks to all of us about the complexity of relationships we have with ourselves, with others, with the natural environment; it grounds us in histories with rich cultural values and problematic practices; it can either feed or starve our bodies as well as our soul.

The narratives—written, visual, oral—presented throughout the semester will be approached through different critical perspectives to lead us to the development of what I call a food consciousness. We will use this food central awareness to strengthen our skills of interpretation and deepen our empathy to the struggles and accomplishments of others. Food voice speaks profoundly about others world views as well as our own.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The measurable objectives via course assessments are fine tuning critical and analytical skills by doing assignments that show how the study of food requires a "holistic culinary approach" that incorporates. The assignments—journal, essays, group presentation, and class discussions--provide pivotal opportunities for increasing written, oral and digital communication skills.

TEXTS AND MATERIALS:
Books (you need to buy)
Films (which you’ll need to rent, or obtain through a service like Netflix)

• *East Side Sushi* directed by Anthony Lucero (2014)
• *Ratatouille* directed by Brad Bird (2007)
• *Burn* directed by John Wells (2015)

• A number of articles, all provided either as pdf within Units in Bb or via a link to the library electronic source.

**PROCEDURES FOR MEETING COURSE GOALS AND STUDENTS’ EVALUATION:**
A literature course will involve without a doubt the *active* act of reading, analyzing and writing. In the case of this course this active process also applies to watching films and oral video recorded stories.

**Reading Assignments:**
You will have regular reading assignments. These are to be completed by the date marked in the calendar, but before coming to class.

**Close Reading Analysis (CRA):**
This assignment will be based on keeping a weekly journal in which you will make entries at least twice per week, *usually on Sundays and Tuesdays* (before our class meeting). All entries need to be dated and numbered. During the first half of the semester, all entries will follow the same format *three-step* format. The goal here is to use this assignment as a space where our right side of our brain, the creative one, and our left side, the analytical, work in concert in the critical interpretation of narratives.

**First:** Begin with clustering—a process where we place a word, a phrase, or an image—called nucleus—in the middle of the page; we draw a circle round it. Then we spend no less than 5 minutes but no more than 10 minutes writing out what ever associations we can make based on the nucleus. The goal here is to let our creative right side brain make connections. It does not matter if they don’t “seem” to go together. The point of the cluster is to free your creative mind to perceive a pattern of meaning.

**Second:** Vignette writing (first draft). On the next blank page of the journal, begin drafting a vignette. You can either use or ignore the cluster you just created. As you write, your left side of the brain will begin to “make” sense of the patterns. Write non-stop for about 5 minutes, but as you conclude your writing, come full circle to the initial thought with which you begun to write. Read your vignette aloud, and make needed changes so that everything holds together.

**Third:** Find tune-vignette (final draft): Now move to your computer, open a word document and spend at least 10 to 15 minutes find tuning the one of your initial vignettes for the week. At this point you might consider adding quotes from the assigned reading to either illustrate or conceptualize some of the patterns of meaning you recognized through first and second step. As we move further into the semester, some of the additional conceptual writing you add to the vignette can come for more than one assigned reading.
This final step needs to be done and submitted through Blackboard (CRA assignment link) between Thursday and Friday of each week.

During the second half of the semester, after week 7 or 8, the format of journal will shift to some degree. We’ll discuss this in class.

**CTM (Critical Thinking Moments):**
Throughout the semester, you’ll have three short written assignments that I’m calling Critical Thinking Moments (CTM) rather than essays. These are written assignments where good grammar and solid syntax are expected—proofread your paper, visit the Writing Center to go over your assignment. I’m calling these CTM because I do expect that what you write reflects a critical awareness of key issues we have explored throughout the semester via the course’s readings, films, oral video stories, and other lecture material as well as our class discussions.

**CTM #1:** The primary text will be a selected piece from *Eating Words*

**CTM #2:** The primary text will be an oral video story from *EPFV* collection. This assignment will be done as a blog entry and include images. (Publication of CTM #2 in EPFV website is a possibility)

**CTM #3:** The primary text will be one of the length book narratives.

These Critical Thinking Moments assignments have to be between 4 to 5 full pages double-space long, typed using only Times 12-point font. **Do not go beyond 6 pages.** It must include a title that sets the reader for what she/he will be reading. It must include at least three to four secondary sources, one which must be an outside source. Incorporate quotes from the primary text of analysis and the secondary texts. Thus, you must also include a work cited reference using MLA format.

**Quizzes:**
Throughout the semester there will be 10 short quizzes, each worth 5 points; some will be announced, some will not.

**Class Group Presentation:**
In groups (which I’ll assign), you will trace the journey a character from one of our selected readings has travelled to come to terms with her/his culinary subjectivity. Through the course, you will explore how understanding a character’s culinary subjectivity (including understanding our own culinary subjectivity) involves a multi-layered process of analysis, which I refer to as “a holistic culinary analysis.” The goal of the presentation is to show this complex, ambivalent, and always in flux form of identity. Each member of the group will concentrate on one central aspect that marks someone’s culinary subjectivity: historical, cultural, political, and conceptual—in terms of embodiment, senses, memory, and authenticity.
Later in the semester, I’ll include in Blackboard a module with more details about how to do this assignment. But, do keep in mind that it will involve some level of technology in its presentation, beyond your typical PowerPoint.

**Two Part Final Project: (Possible publication in EPFV’s blog series)**

**Part One:** Write, storyboard, film, photo-document a journey describing/illustrating an aspect of your culinary subjectivity. Rely on your creative right side of the brain to visualize your own culinary narrative. Logistics for this part will be provided later.

**Part Two:** Using your own food consciousness as a theoretical anchor, write a 2 to 3 double space analysis of your culinary subjectivity that shows its social, cultural, historical, etc. complexity of this ever changing identity marker of who we have been, who we are and who we might become.

**COURSE STRUCTURE:**

The class will use Blackboard to organize the calendar and assignments. This organization is structured by weekly modules. Inside each module you will find the following information:

1) Calendar for the week
2) Reading material (all articles are provided as pdf). Books, you’re expected to buy.
3) Occasional lecture material (do read and view all short videos within weekly modules)
4) Links to submit CRA’s final vignettes
5) Links to submit all three CTM (only in weeks when assigned)

The group presentation and final project will be organized in separate modules.

**NOTE:** It is your responsibility to have the correct software programs/systems needed for this class. If your computer at home stops working for some reason, it is your responsibility to find a computer that works (at the library, perhaps) in order to meet the deadlines for assignments and posted discussions.

**Course Policies:**

**Attendance:** You must come to class on Mondays and Wednesdays, be on time and stay till class is over to receive full credit for class participation.

**Make-up work:** All work is due as assigned. There are no “make-ups.” *Do not submit late work and simply expect me to accept it.* You need to own this responsibility. If you foresee an issue with meeting a deadline, bring this to my attention and we will process accordantly. I follow the policy found in the Class Attendance section of the Undergraduate Catalog.

**Plagiarism:** This is against the law. I prefer to teach and not act as a police officer and report anyone suspected of committing such a crime to the Dean of Students. Just leave criminal behavior out of the course, please. This action only stifles your own intellectual, social, and personal growth.

**Disability Statement:** If you have or believe you have a disability, you may wish to contact the Disabled Student Services Office (CASS) to show documentation of a disability or to register for testing and services. Students who have been designated as disabled must reactivate their standing with the CASS yearly. If you feel that you may have a disability requiring accommodations and/or modifications, contact
CASS at 915-747-5148. You also can visit the CASS website at [www.utep.edu/dsso](http://www.utep.edu/dsso) or the CASS office in Room 108 East Union Building.

**GRADING:**
10 quizzes at 5 points each = 50
CRA (journal) 12 x 20 points per entry = 144
  - Clustering 5 pts.
  - Vignette (1st draft) 5 pts.
  - Vignette (final draft) 10 pts.
CTM 3 at 30 points each = 90
Class Group Presentation 30
Two Part Final Project: 40
Class participation/attendance 20

Total 374

**Grade Range:**
374 – 336 = A
335 – 299 = B
298 – 262 = C
261 – 224 = D
Below 223 = F

**FINAL NOTE:** As the professor, I reserve the right to modify the course; however, students will be given plenty of notice.