

Geography 111-FR1: American Foodways
Course Syllabus – Fall 2012
Alumni 1312 on MW @ 1:30-2:45

Instructor: Dr. Gillian Acheson

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Office hours: MW 10:30-11:30; or, by appointment

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Blackboard: Lecture slides, assignments, and other course materials are posted to Blackboard (<https://bb.siue.edu>)

Course Description: Food is a necessary component of life – we cannot survive without it – and, it is oftentimes one of life's great joys. The production of food changes landscapes, the distribution of food brings a variety of cultures into contact with one another, and what foods are consumed are often a cultural identifier. This New Freshman Seminar (NFS) will explore the unique aspects of American food from a geographic perspective. In particular, we will focus on American foodways – both past and present.

Course Objectives: Successful completion of this course entails developing and demonstrating an understanding about the relationship between American cultures, food and geography. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to do the following: (1) identify regional patterns of American food; (2) connect, describe and explain the relationship between cultural groups and their environment; and, (3) map foodways in the local area.

In addition, as an NFS, students will develop knowledge and skills that will prepare them to be successful throughout their undergraduate career at SIUE. Specifically, students will (1) develop their reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, (2) work collaboratively with their classmates, and (3) gain knowledge and skills about a variety of university and community resources available to them at SIUE and in the St. Louis metropolitan area.

Texts:

- a. Beahrs, Andrew. 2010. *Twain's Feast: Searching for America's Lost Foods in the Footsteps of Samuel Clemmons*. New York: Penguin Group.
- b. Supplemental readings available via Blackboard.

Course Mechanics: Your final grade is a weighted average; each assignment is graded on a 100-point scale. A grade calculator is posted on Blackboard to help you calculate your grade.

Exams	Midterm	20%
	Final	20%
Final project	Paper	15%
	Presentation	5%
Fieldwork assignments	4 assignments	20%
Discussion	Participation	10%
	Discussion questions	5%
	Group reading presentation	5%

Exams will be a combination of definitions, short answer, and essay questions based on class material and assigned readings. A review sheet will be provided prior to each exam. Please note: exams are not cumulative.

Make-up exams will only be granted if you (1) contact me within 24 hours of missing the exam, and (2) have a valid, University-sanctioned excuse. Exams taken on any day other than the scheduled exam day will be essay format.

Final project: Your final project will examine a specific topic on American food using a geographical perspective. The topic is your choice, but it must be approved by me ahead of time. During the last week of class, you will present your project in class (5% of your final grade), and turn in a 6-8 page paper (15% of your final grade). A detailed description of the project, and a grading rubric will be provided and discussed in class.

Field work assignments: There will be four field work assignments over the course of the semester: (1) a personal food diary, (2) a food profile, (3) a regional cookbook or restaurant review, and (4) mapping foodways in a local community. Each assignment is worth 5 percent of your final grade; details for each assignment will be provided and discussed in class.

Discussion: A significant portion (20%) of your final grade is based on class discussion. Most Wednesdays will be discussion-based. Your discussion grade is based on 3 components: (a) questions, (b) a short group reading presentation, and (c) participation:

- a. Questions (5%): During the first week of class you will sign up for one discussion day. You will be responsible for writing 3-4 discussion questions based on that day's readings. For each question, you must include (1) the author or title of the reading you are referring to, (2) the page number(s) where the question comes from, and (3) a brief answer/response to your question (a bulleted list is acceptable). The questions must be typed and submitted to me via email one week ahead of the scheduled discussion date. Take time to carefully word your questions so that they are understandable and prompt discussion.
- b. Short group reading presentation (5%): In a small group, you will give a brief presentation on one of the sections of the Beahrs' book. Details will be given in class.
- c. Participation (10%): In both small groups and as a whole class, there will be ample opportunity for discussion. During small group discussion, I will visit each group to talk with you one-on-one about your thoughts and opinions on the week's readings. In addition, I will keep track of your participation throughout the semester. A grading rubric, posted to the course website, is used to evaluate your participation grade; be sure to take a look at it early on in the semester so that you know how you will be graded. From time to time, I will gauge your individual reading with short quizzes.

Group work: For many, but not all, of the assignments in class, you will have the option to work individually, in pairs, or in small (3-4) groups. If you choose to complete an assignment with another classmate(s), one grade will be awarded the entire group.

Grade distribution: Letter grades will be assigned based on the following distribution: A (90% and above); B (80-89.9%); C (70-79.9%); D (60-69.9%); and, F (59.9% and below).

Attendance: Because discussion is a significant portion of your grade, attendance is important. More than three unexcused absence will result in a lowered final grade: five points from your final average for each additional day missed. Please note: *you are responsible for all course material regardless of attendance.*

Discussing your grades: Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, I cannot discuss your grade with anyone other than you. Graded assignments will be returned promptly so that you know how you are doing in this course, and you are always welcome to stop by my office to discuss your grades and/or any of your work in this course. In addition, I will post grades to the course website by a 4-digit PIN of your choosing if you consent to do so.

Class Courtesy: It is important for each person enrolled in this course to be treated with, and to treat others, with respect and courtesy. Please be sure to do the following:

- (1) Come to class on time and stay for the entire class. If you must arrive late or depart early, do so quickly and quietly;
- (2) Turn your cell phone off (no calls, no text messaging);
- (3) Come to class prepared to listen and participate (in other words do not do other work, read the newspaper, sleep, or have private conversations while in this class);
- (4) Listen to each other's comments and opinions with an open mind; and,
- (5) Avoid using offensive speech. Inflammatory comments that provoke or insult anyone in this class will not be tolerated.

Scholastic Honesty: Each student enrolled is expected to earn her/his grade honestly, without cheating. Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses; they will not be tolerated. Cheating of any kind will be dealt with according to the *Student Code of Conduct*. (See www.siue.edu/policies/1i6.shtml for more information.)

ADA Statement: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. Contact Disability Support Services at 650-3726 for more information and assistance.

Schedule and Readings: The schedule listed below is flexible and can be modified over the course of the semester. (Beahrs = Twain's Feast; BB = Blackboard articles)

Week	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	8/20	Introductions; syllabus	[No reading]
	8/22	Introduction to geography	1a-You eat that? (BB)
2	8/27	Agricultural production	1b-Drought forces reductions... (BB) 1c-It's easy to be cowed... (BB) 1d-Introducing children to the sources... (BB)
	8/29	Discussion #1	<i>Readings 1a-1d must be completed by this class</i>

3	9/3	Labor Day – No Class!	
	9/5	The American diet (food & nutrition)	2a-Package may say healthy... (BB) 2b-On McDonald's menu... (BB) 2c-School lunches become...(BB)
4	9/10	Food access in the US	2d-Can pop-up grocery stores solve... (BB)
	9/12	Discussion #2	<i>Readings 2a-2d must be completed by this class</i>
5	9/17	Food safety	3a-Senate passes sweeping food... (BB) 3b-Good to eat, good to think (BB) 3c-From milk to peas, a Chinese food... (BB)
	9/19	Discussion #3	<i>Readings 3a-3c must be completed by this class</i>
6	9/24	A global diet	4a-The real story of globalization (BB) 4b-Teach us, Trader Joe (BB)
	9/26	Discussion #4	<i>Readings 4a-4b must be completed by this class</i>
7	10/1	Tying it all together...	[No Reading]
	10/3	Midterm	[No Reading]
8	10/8	Regional food: The Midwest	5a: Pages 1-48 (Beahrs)
	10/10		5b: Pasties in Michigan's UP... (BB) 5c: The Cincinnati chili culinary... (BB)
9	10/15	Discussion #5	<i>Readings 5a-5c must be completed by this class</i>
	10/17	Regional food: The South	6a-Pages 49-112 (Beahrs)
10	10/22		6b-Cajuns & crawfish (BB) 6c-A fast food loyalty (BB)
	10/24	Discussion #6	<i>Readings 6a-6c must be completed by this class</i>
11	10/29	Regional food: The Southwest & The Pacific Northwest	7a-Pages 113-166 (Beahrs) 7b-The geography of food in eastern OK (BB) 7c-In Oregon, truffles are no match... (BB)
	10/31	Discussion #7	<i>Readings 7a-7c must be completed by this class</i>
12	11/5	Project work time	[No Reading]
	11/7	Regional food: The Mid Atlantic	8a-Pages 166-216 (Beahrs)
13	11/12		8b-The Maine lobster... (BB) 8c-Lost, then found: NY classics (BB)
	11/14	Discussion #8 & project work time	<i>Readings 8a-8c must be completed by this class</i>
---	11/19-21	Thanksgiving Break – No Class!	
14	11/26	American food: Thanksgiving, barbecue, & fast food	9a-Pages 217-290 (Beahrs) 9b-Fast foods (BB) 9c-At the fair, do calories on a stick... (BB)
	11/28	Discussion #9 & project work time	<i>Readings 9a-9c must be completed by this class</i>
15	12/3-5	Project presentations	[No reading]
---	12/13	Final Exam (Thursday from 12-1:40 pm)	