

Greek Food Cultures, EURO-W406/W605

Since everyone must eat, what we eat becomes a most powerful symbol of who we are. To set yourself apart from others by what you will and will not eat is a social barrier almost as powerful as the incest taboo, which tells us with whom we may or may not have sex.

--Robin Fox

Tell me what you eat, and I will tell you who you are.

--Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin

Food is a window into culture. It is simultaneously a mechanism for cultural self-definition and for negotiating cultural contact and cultural change. Our food choices reflect both who we are and what we are becoming. They overlap with and influence multiple arenas of cultural production: religion, health care and medicine, language, family, commerce, and entertainment, among others. They are a central factor in the production of group identity.

In this course, students are invited to explore Greek culture through its food. We will begin, historically, by exploring the dietary choices of inhabitants of the region that is today Greece during Classical antiquity and the Roman/Byzantine Empire. We will then examine how the discovery of the Americas and the Turkish conquest of Byzantium influenced the Mediterranean diet. Finally, we will investigate how more recent events—the population exchanges of 1923 between Greece and Turkey that followed Greece's Asia Minor campaign, the Nazi occupation of Greece during World War II, and globalization and neoliberalism—have altered Greece's food culture.

With this historical foundation in place, we will begin to explore the dynamics of food in contemporary Greek society. Greece's food practices have been shaped by the country's encounters with modernity and globalization. The Greek diet has been dramatically altered by imported foods and beverages, yet it has simultaneously remained resistant to many global food trends. Greece is, for instance, a graveyard for American fast food chains. Wendy's has come and gone. McDonald's is down to 19 stores in all of Greece, with the vast majority of them in touristy areas and many of them reputedly on life support. (Central Athens has only one store.) Even Starbucks is on the run, facing intense local competition from traditional coffee shops and a new Greek franchise, Mikel. We will explore the dynamics of Greece's encounters with modernity and globalization by examining phenomena such as the consumption of Scotch whiskey, the country's childhood obesity crisis, the relation of food to nostalgia, the emergence of Greek foodie culture and an interest in regional cuisines, and the influence of European Union Membership on Greek food culture.

Expectations

The student will be required to complete weekly readings and attend regular twice-weekly class meetings. The student will be responsible for keeping a food journal in which they will be expected to regularly write in preparation for and response to class. There will also be a 4-6 page analytical paper as well as a midterm and a final exam.

This course will be conducted seminar style. Accordingly, lectures and classroom discussions will form the core of this course. **Attendance is mandatory as is participation in classroom activities. You are allowed two absences. Missing three or more classes may affect your final grade negatively. Six or more absences may result in failure.**

I expect active, engaged participation in classroom activities. This means coming to class prepared. I reserve the right to administer pop quizzes if I feel readings are not being completed. Students will occasionally be asked to help facilitate classroom activities by providing discussion questions, preparing in-class presentations, journaling in preparation for discussion, and assuming leadership roles in classroom discussions. These activities will all constitute part of your participation grade.

Grade Breakdown

Attendance and participation: 30%

Food Journal: 20%

Midterm Exam: 10%

Final Exam: 15%

Formal Writing Assignment #1: 12.5%

Formal Writing Assignment #2: 12.5%

Required Books

Warren Belasco, *Food: Key Concepts*

David Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts: An Anthropology of Food and Memory*

Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941-44*

Christopher Bakken, *Honey, Olives, Octopus: Adventures in the Greek Table*

Tryfon Bampilis, *Greek Whiskey: The Localization of a Global Commodity*

Other Bibliography

Ashley, Bob et al. "The National Diet" in *Food and Cultural Studies* (New York: Routledge, 2004), pp 75-90.

Beer, Michael. "Diet in the Ancient World" in *Taste or Taboo: Dietary Choices in Antiquity* (Blackawton, Eng.: Prospect Books, 2010).

Broekaert, Wim and Arjan Zuidercoek. "Food Systems in Classical Antiquity" in *A Cultural History of Food in Antiquity*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (New York: Berg, 2012), pp. 41-56.

Dalby, Andrew. *Flavors of Byzantium* (London: Prospect, 2003).

Davidson, Alan. "Europe's Wary Encounter with Tomatoes, Potatoes, and Other New World Foods" in *Chilies to Chocolate: Foods the Americas gave the World*, ed. Nelson Foster and Linda S. Cordell (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1992).

Douglas, Mary. "Deciphering a Meal."

Dubisch, Jill. "Culture Enters through the Kitchen: in Rural Greece: Women, Food and Social Boundaries in Rural Greece" in *Gender and Power in Rural Greece*, ed. Jill Dubisch (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986).

Ellis, Steven J. R. "Eating and Drinking Out" in *A Cultural History of Food in Antiquity*, ed. Paul Erdkamp (New York: Berg, 2012), pp. 95-112.

Gallant, Thomas W. *Modern Greece* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2001).

Gallant, Thomas W. *A Fisherman's Tale* (Ghent: Belgian Archaeological Mission in Greece, 1985).

Grumett, David and Rachel Muers. *Theology on the Menu: Asceticism, Meat, and Christian Diet* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

Hirschon, Renée. "Refugees for Fifty Years" and "The Ottoman Past in the Refugee Present" in *Heirs of the Greek Catastrophe: The Social Life of Asia Minor Refugees in Piraeus* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989).

Levi-Strauss, Claude. "The Culinary Triangle."

Mintz, Sidney. "Time, Sugar, Sweetness" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*, eds. Carole Counihan and Penny Van Esterik (New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 357-369.

Nunn, Nathan and Nancy Qian. "The Columbian Exchange: A History of Disease Food and Ideas." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 24(Spring 2010): pp. 163-188. Online at <http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.24.2.163>.

Petridou, Elia. "The Taste of Home" in *Home Possessions: Material Culture behind Closed Doors*, ed. Daniel Miller (New York: Berg, 2001)

Rosenblum, Mort. *Olives: The Life and Lore of a Noble Fruit* (New York: North Point, 1996).

Schönhärl, Korinna. Fighting the Financial Crisis in Greece: The Privileged Company to Protect Production and Trade in Currants (1905) as International Bank Cooperation. *Historical Review* 10(2013). Online at: <http://historicalreview.org/index.php/historicalReview/article/view/308>.

West, Harry G. et al. "Naming Cheese." *Journal of Food, Culture and Society* 15:1 (2012), pp. 7-42.

West, John A. "A Brief History and Botany of Cacao" in *Chilies to Chocolate: Foods the Americas gave the World*, ed. Nelson Foster and Linda S. Cordell (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1992).

Zubaidi, Sami and Richard Tapper. *A Taste of Thyme: Culinary Cultures of the Middle East* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994).

Tentative Syllabus

Prior to Leaving for Greece

Session #1: Risks and Rewards of Studying Abroad. In this session, students will be invited to explore their motivations for studying abroad. We will discuss the potential benefits of studying abroad and the potential pitfalls.

Session #2: An Introduction to Greece. After beginning with a brief history of the country, we will address the following questions. What are some of the fundamental elements of Greek culture? How is Greek culture similar from and different to American culture? What are some of the things that they may find strange about life in Greece?

Session #3: An Introduction to Food Studies and the Practicalities of Travelling to Greece. The first half of this session will be devoted to the Introduction to Warren Belasco's *Food Culture: An Introduction*. The second part of the session will deal with practicalities: What should they pack? How should they prepare themselves to travel? What should they do to help mitigate jet lag? What are the do's and don'ts of being in Greece? What are the personal conduct policies that they will need follow during the duration of the class and what will be the consequences if they don't follow them? What procedures will we follow on class trips?

Reading: Prior to Leaving for Greece and on the Plane

Belasco: C2 "Identity: We Are What We Eat" and Readings: Belasco, C3 "The Drama of Food: Divided Identities"

Christopher Bakken, *Honey, Olives, Octopus*

Week 1

Day 1: Monday, May 16

First and second hours: Approaches to Food Culture

Afternoon: Adjustment and Exploration of the Local Area

Day 2

Food in Antiquity

Part 1: The Continuity Theory and Its Dangers (lecture)

Part 2: What and how did the ancients eat?

Reading: McGowan, "Ordering Food in Graeco-Roman Antiquity"

Afternoon: Field trip to the Acropolis and the Acropolis Museum

Day 3

Food in Antiquity

The Politics of Food and the Dynamics of Eating Out in the Ancient World

Readings: Broekaert and Zuiderhoek "Food and Politics in Classical Antiquity" and Ellis, "Eating and Drinking Out" in Erdkamp, *A Cultural History of Food in Antiquity*

Evening: Class Dinner at Archaeon Gevisis (Flavors of the Ancients)

Day 4

Christian Transformations of Diet:

Defining a Christian Culture through Food

Readings: David M. Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law*, Chapters 6, 7, and 8.

The Continuous Presence of the Olive

Reading: Mort Rosenblum, "Olives" and "Wild Olives" from *Olives*.

Day 5 (Depart for Field Trip to the Peloponnese and Mani)

Site seeing and shopping and Lunch in Nafpleio

Museum of the Olive and Olive Oil in Sparta

Afternoon visit to Antalea Olive Oil, olive producer in Kalamata

Dinner and Hotel in Messinia

Day 6 (Depart for Mani)

Honey producer in Mani

Olive Oil Producer in Mani

Dinner in Areopoli -- Local food

Day 7 (Return to Athens)

Dirou Caves and lecture on Neolithic diet,

Swim and seafood in Limeni

Return to Athens

Week 2

Day 1

The Emergence of Modern Greek Cuisine: Pre-Columbian and Post-Columbian

First half: The Columbian Exchange

Reading: Nunn and Qian, "The Columbian Exchange"

(<http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/jep.24.2.163>.)

Second half: "The Greek Diet, Yesterday and Today"

Day 2

Byzantine Cuisine and Ottoman Cuisines and Their Influence

Readings: Andrew Dalby, "Foods and Markets of Istanbul" from *Flavors of Istanbul*; Tapper and Zubaida, Selections from *A Taste of Thyme*

Day 3

Exam Day and the Greek Nation and Greek Cuisine

First half: Midterm Exam

Second half: The Nation State, Greek Agriculture, and Immigration

Reading: Gallant, *Modern Greece*, selections. Schönhärl, "Fighting Financial Crisis."

Afternoon: Visit to Lazaridis Wine Museum and the Bread Museum

Class Dinner: Restaurant Specializing in the Cuisine of Asia Minor Greeks

Paper #1 Assigned

Day 4

The Treaty of Lausanne/Population Exchanges

Old Greeks and the Baptized in Yoghurt

Evening, Screening Tassos Boulmetis, *A Touch of Spice*

Day 5

From Greeks of Asia Minor to Occupation and Famine

First hour: Discussion, *A Touch of Spice*.

Second Hour: World War II and the Tragedy of Nazi Occupation

Readings: Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece* (15-72)

Afternoon: Visit to the Farmer's Market of Agia Paraskevi

Evening: Film, Dinos Katsouridis, *What Did You Do During the War, Thanassis?*

Day 6

Free Day

Day 7

Free Day

Week 3

Day 1

Famine and Feast

First hour: Discuss Dinos Katsouridis, *What Did You Do During the War, Thanassis?*

Second hour: The Syndrome of the Occupation

Paper #1 Due

Paper #2 Assigned

Afternoon: Excursion to a food cooperative in Halkidiki, Euboia

Day 2

Consumerism and Food

First hour: Discuss Dinos Katsouridis, *What Did You Do During the War, Thanassis?*

Second hour: The Syndrome of the Occupation

Readings: Selections from Bampilis, *Greek Whiskey* and Belasco, Chapter 4:

Convenience: The Global Food Chain.

Day 3

Food and Memory

Food as Memory, Food as Practice

Readings: Selections from Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts*

Afternoon: Excursion to Sounio

Day 4

The Mediterranean Diet

Readings: Various selections from *The New York Times* and other sources.

Day 5

Food, Crisis, and Economics in the EU: from feta as a Protected Designation of Origin to a new famine

Day 6

Paper #2 Due

Final Exam

Final Class Meal

Day 7 Sunday, June 5

Depart DERE