



SYLLABUS

Food and Culture in Greece: Past and Present

Instructor: Stephen Wooten

Language of Instruction: English

UO Credits: 6

Contact Hours*: 60

Total Hours of Student Engagement (THSE) in all course activities*: 180

GREECE: Athens, Kea, the Peloponnese Peninsula, and Crete

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In terms of food, culture and history, few places in the world can match Greece – ancient Hellas, the modern Hellenic Republic. Greece is world famous for its delicious, distinctive and exceptionally healthy food and cuisine: feta; honey; olives; *spanakopita*; seafood and lamb; and, of course, yogurt. Greek identity is tightly linked to these foods. Likewise, its contributions to the global community are monumental. Mythic figures like Zeus; philosophical greats like Aristotle; archaeological sites like the Acropolis; and influential ideas like democracy are just a few Greek gifts to world heritage. Food played an important role in the development of these touchstones of civilization. Indeed, Greece is a place where food, culture and history have developed in intimate and consequential ways for thousands of years, from ancient times to the present day.

“Food and Culture in Greece” is an active and intensive, three-week program that allows participants to develop an intimate, hands-on appreciation for the role of food in Greece’s rich and storied past and to see how it mediates social, political, environmental, cultural and economic processes in contemporary life as well.

Through structured engagements with influential texts in food studies and Greek food, culture and history and guided encounters in key food related locations (ancient and contemporary) across the country participants will gain important insights into Greek cuisine in the three different and complementary regional contexts. The program focuses on experiential learning in the historical rich and dynamically modern city of Athens and on the nearby Cycladic Island of Kea, the productive fields and vineyards of the charming Peloponnese region and in Crete, the sun-drenched the epicenter of the UNESCO World Heritage recognized Mediterranean diet. These areas of Greece are all famous for their strong food-based identities, their beautiful landscapes and the high quality of their foods and wines.

In this program participants will learn from trusted and accomplished scholars as well as local intellectuals, food producers and purveyors: professors, writers, small and large-scale farmers and vintners, family cooks and professional chefs, and creative entrepreneurs who are building internationally recognized sustainable food businesses that preserve and celebrate Greece's food culture. While much will be learned about the Greek experience with food and culture, students will also come away with key food studies concepts that are applicable in any world context.

The program is taught in English; there is no language requirement and the program is open to all majors. It is particularly suitable for students in food studies, business, environmental studies, sociology, international studies, geography, humanities and anthropology.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Instructional Goals. The course will:

- Introduce key concepts and theories in the field of food studies
- Develop a "food and culture" perspective
- Provide a historical perspective on food's place in Greek society and culture
- Underscore the enduring role food plays in contemporary Greece and highlight regional variations

Student Outcomes. Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Identify and describe the central concepts used in food studies
- Explain and utilize the "food and culture" framework
- Provide a substantive overview of the role of food in Greek history
- Provide a substantive overview of the role of food in contemporary Greece
- Offer an in-depth analysis of a selected topic related to Greek food and culture

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Overall, the class will function as a field-based seminar. By design experiential learning will be prioritized. The ultimate goal is to observe and understand Greek food dynamics *in situ*.

In the weeks before the program begins participants will read key sources in preparation for their study abroad time in Greece. They will produce reading notes for their assigned material and will arrive on site ready to apply the knowledge and insights they have acquired through their engagement with the required texts.

Required texts:

Bakken, C. (2013). *Honey, olives, octopus: Adventures at the Greek table*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Belasco, W. J. (2008). *Food: The key concepts*. Oxford: Berg.

Dalby, A. (1997). *Siren feasts: A history of food and gastronomy in Greece*. New York: Routledge.

Additional topical and site-specific readings will be provided in packet form.

Each day of the in-country program will offer myriad opportunities to connect book learning with direct observations and experiences. Using a blog or paper journal students will produce daily reflections on the connections they see between the course readings and the lessons learned and insights gained in the field. In the spirit of the classic Greek “symposium” each week will end with a spirited discussion in which participants share food and offer their reflections with the instructor and their peers.

The primary mechanism for learning will be an independent research project. At the end of week one, after having acquired a strong conceptual foundation and a general sense of Greek food, culture and history, students will identify and propose a selected topic of interest to explore during the remaining two weeks of the program. Once approved they will pay particular attention to their chosen theme as we study foodways across the country, taking notes and developing insights for their final projects. Each student will receive one-on-one mentorship in the development and completion of their projects. The final products will be presented in a capstone symposium held on the last day of the program.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Reading and reflection: Students will produce a 3-5 page essay in which they identify and discuss key aspects of the assigned sources. These essays will be part review and part individual analysis. (10%)

Direct observations: Students’ blog or journal entries will be evaluated for quality of connection between themes and concepts in their readings and their own observations in the field. (20%)

Symposium participation: Student contributions to the weekly symposia will be evaluated in terms of appropriateness of content and quality of insights shared. (10%)

Research Project: Evaluation of this key component of the course will occur at several different levels.

Proposal: Students will present a one-page statement in which they lay out their topic, the key concepts to be engaged, the methods to be used, and describe the nature of their intended final product (a traditional research paper, a video, a podcast, a guidebook, etc.). (5%)

Work in progress report: Students will provide a one-page project update at the end of week two. (5%)

Capstone symposium presentation: Students will share the results of their research at the culminating symposium. Evaluation will be based on quality of presentation and effectiveness of sharing. (5%)

Final product: Students will submit their final product no more than two weeks after the close of the program. Materials will be submitted electronically. Evaluation will be based on the quality of the research results, the productivity of the connections made to the key literature, and the explanation of the lessons learned. (45%)

COURSE OUTLINE

Pre-departure work: Reading and reflection

Engagement with key sources in food studies, food and culture, and Greek foodways –past and present

In-country program

Encountering Greek Foodways – Past and Present

Week One

Encounter 1: Athens and Kea: Ancient Roots/Dynamic Growth

Concepts: Food Studies, Food and Culture, and the Greek Context

Historical focus: Iconic Figures and Monuments of Western Civilization; Aristotle, Plato and Socrates, the Acropolis, the Agora, and National Museums.

Contemporary focus: Modern cuisine in the city; neighborhood identities; cutting-edge food and wine businesses; urban farming; Central Market, Gastronomy Museum; cooking and culinary tourism on Kea.

Instructional activity: Classes, Guided Site Visits, Guided Tastings, Cooking Session, Journaling, Weekly Symposium

Week Two

Encounter 2: The Peloponnese Peninsula: An Agricultural Powerhouse

Concepts: Food History, Culinary Mixture, Food Economies

Historical focus: Mycenaean roots to the Ottoman period; Homer’s legacy; Museums of Ancient Corinth, Delphi, Mycenae, Olympia and Nafplio

Contemporary focus: Vegetable and fruit production; Goat, bread and honey; Wine craft and industry. Orchard, farm and vineyard visits

Instructional activity: Classes, Guided Site Visits, Guided Tastings, Journaling, Weekly Symposium

Week Three

Encounter 3: Crete: An Island Crossroad

Concepts: Mediterranean identities and connections, “the” Mediterranean diet

Historical focus: From Minoan culture roots to the Turkish era. Archaeological sites and museums from Knossos, Malia and Phaistos

Contemporary focus: Tourism, Immigrants/Refugees. Heraklion market, Wild foods, Yogurt and cheese, Orchard, farm, and vineyard visits. Restaurant and resort culture.

Instructional activity: Classes, Guided Site Visits, Guided Tastings, Journaling, Capstone Symposium

Post-program work: Completion of course project

Participants will complete additional research and finalize their research projects and submit their final products for evaluation.

Bibliography

Food Studies and Food & Culture

Albala, K. (2012). *Routledge international handbook of food studies*. London: Routledge.

Belasco, W. J. (2008). *Food: The key concepts*. Oxford: Berg.

Counihan, C., & Esterik, P. V. (2013). *Food and culture: A reader*. New York: Routledge.

Flandrin, J.-L., Montanari, M., & Sonnenfeld, A. (2013). *Food: A culinary history from antiquity to the present*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Katz, S. H., & Weaver, W. W. (2003). *Encyclopedia of food and culture*. New York: Scribner.

Miller, J., & Deutsch, J. (2010). *Food studies: An introduction to research methods*. Oxford: Berg.

Montanari, M. (2006). *Food is culture*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Swift, C. L., & Wilk, R. (2015). *Teaching food and culture*. Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press.

Watson, J. L., & Caldwell, M. L. (2005). *The cultural politics of food and eating: A reader*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Greek Food History & Culture

Alston, R., & Nijf, Onno van. (2008). *Feeding the ancient Greek city*. Dudley, MA: Peeters.

Bakken, C. (2013). *Honey, olives, octopus: Adventures at the Greek table*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Dalby, A. (1997). *Siren feasts: A history of food and gastronomy in Greece*. New York: Routledge.

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Donahue, J. (2015). *Food and drink in antiquity: Readings from the Graeco-Roman World: A sourcebook*. New York: Bloomsbury.

Halstead, P., Barrett, John C, & Round Table on Aegean Archaeology. (2004). *Food, cuisine and society in prehistoric Greece*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.

König, J. (2012). *Saints and symposiasts: The literature of food and the symposium in Greco-Roman and early Christian culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McClure, L. (2003). *Courtesans at table: Gender and Greek literary culture in Athenaeus*. New York: Routledge.

Nielsen, I., & Nielsen, Hanne. (1998). *Meals in a social context: Aspects of the communal meal in the Hellenistic and Roman world*. Aarhus: Aarhus University Press.

Olson, S., & Sens, Alexander. (2000). *Archestratos of Gela: Greek culture and cuisine in the fourth century BCE : Text, translation, and commentary*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Sutton, D. (2001). *Remembrance of repast: An anthropology of food and memory*. New York: Berg.

Sutton, D. (2014). *Secrets from the Greek kitchen: Cooking, skill, and everyday life on an Aegean Island*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wilkins, J., & Nadeau, R. (2015). *A companion to food in the ancient world*. Oxford: John Wiley.

Wilkins, J. (2000). *The boastful chef : The discourse of food in ancient Greek comedy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Greek Cookbooks

Chantiles, V. L. (1975). *The food of Greece*. New York: Atheneum.

Hoffman, S. (2004). *The olive and the caper: Adventures in Greek cooking*. New York: Workman.

Kochilas, D. (2001). *The glorious foods of Greece: Traditional recipes from the islands, cities, and villages*. New York: William Morrow.

Kremezi, A. (1993). *The foods of Greece*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang.

Kremezi, A. (2015). *The foods of the Greek islands: Cooking and culture at the crossroads of the Mediterranean*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Spoerri, D. (1982). *Mythology & meatballs: A Greek island diary/cookbook*. Berkeley: Aris Books.

Yianilos, T. K. (1970). *The complete Greek cookbook: The best from three thousand years of Greek cooking*. New York: Funk & Wagnalls.