



FRENCH GASTRONOMY AND GLOBAL FOOD CULTURE (3 CREDITS)

01:420:283, 01:070:283

Fall 2026

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I do my best to respond to e-mails within 24 hours, excluding weekends.

IN PERSON TTH 3:50-5:10 PM, ED-025

Course's CANVAS site: <https://rutgers.instructure.com/courses/288406>

Office hours

T 2:30-3:30 and by appointment, AB 4185, 15 Seminary Place, West Wing, fourth floor.

Student support hours are a relaxed, judgment-free time just for you to ask questions, get help with course material, or talk through study strategies, organization skills, or even graduate school and career plans. You don't need a specific problem to stop by— I'm happy to chat and help you make the most of your time in the course and beyond.

Course Description

What to expect and what is expected?

In a nutshell:

What are the secrets of the French diet? Why is the baguette part of the world's cultural heritage? In what ways is the gastronomy of France still relevant today? As codified by Carême (1784-1833) and Escoffier (1846-1935), the modern French culinary tradition long provided a shared international language. Today, however, as the “gastronomic meal of the French” joins the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, elaborate foodways may feel like something of the past. And yet, the appeal of French cooking endures, as attested by social media.

In this course, you will explore food practices in France in a historical perspective, from medieval banquets to ready-to-serve dishes and technology-driven futurist cooking. We will ask how food habits and culinary practices change over time and how culinary culture contributes to shaping local, national, and transnational identity. Contemporary issues will be related to key moments in the history of French food: meals as social and political performance; culinary revolutions; the rationalization of culinary work and kitchen architecture; the industrialization of food; the impact of technology and media on food habits; the waning influence of French gastronomy on global food culture.

Taught in person in two required weekly meetings (TTH), the course may include extracurricular activities that can be used for extra credit. Should you be unable to attend a class meeting, you will find have access to most of the materials presented in class on the LMS (Canvas).

Class related activities include readings of primary sources (cookbooks and art); consulting and identifying secondary sources; hands-on activities such as recreating recipes of the past; exploring culinary media, from Early Modern food writing to the first cooking shows to contemporary social media.

Assignments will promote a variety of methodologies and disciplinary perspectives. Individualized research topics allow students to build on interests and areas of expertise research topics allow students to build on interests and areas of expertise, from Anthropology to Food Science.

Required course materials

Freedman, Paul, *et al.*, ed. *Food in Time and Place: the American Historical Association Companion to Food History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014. ISBN 9780520283589.

Our main textbook is available at the University bookstore [Barnes and Noble University bookstore](#). Please note that purchase is not required: you can read chapters on-line or download a PDF version through Rutgers library services . Additional readings will be available or linked on Canvas.

Technology Requirements

- Basic computer and web-browsing skills; familiarity with Canvas and Google Docs.
- Camera (some assignments may include video recording)

- Internet Access, Chrome or Firefox browser
- Microsoft Word, Adobe Reader.

Please visit the [Rutgers Student Tech Guide website](#) for resources available to all students. If you do not have the appropriate technology for financial reasons, please email the Dean of Students at deanofstudents@echo.rutgers.edu for assistance. If you are facing other financial hardships, please visit the [Office of Financial Aid](#).

Learning Goals

Course learning goals, aligned with the French Department Undergraduate Learning Goals (Goal 1: Cultural Awareness)

DEVELOP cultural competence, cross-cultural skills, and global literacy

EVALUATE food as total social fact: by mid-semester you will be able to grasp how socio-economic structures relate to values, beliefs, and forms of artistic expression

DOCUMENT and DISCUSS. By the end of the semester, you will be able to identify and meaningfully combine a variety of sources and data to research a topic relevant to your educational background, interests and career goals

Meets the following goals in the SAS/SEBS Core Curriculum

APPROACH a contemporary global issue from multiple perspectives: by mid-semester you will be able to connect insights from two or more disciplines to your own experience. [CCO]

EXPLAIN the origins of food practices and their development over time: by the end of the semester, you will be able to fully grasp the historical specificity of cultural practices, including our own. [HST]

Grading Scale

A=90–100; B+=85–89; B=80–84; C+=75–79; C=70–74; D=65–69; F=<65

Warning grades for performance and/or attendance (W1, W2, W3) will be assigned by mid-semester. Receiving a warning grade is a way to encourage you to reach out to your instructor. It does not mean you will fail the course.

Grading Components and Weights

Assessments 25% (at least two in-class tests);