

# Bizarre Foods

Anthro 256H Spring 2014  
Tuesday and Thursday 1- 2:15  
Machmer Hall Rm. E33  
Prof. Sonya Atalay

\*\*This is a General Education course meeting two GenEd designations -- Social & Behavioral Sciences and Global Diversity.\*\*



Pig brains, coffee from digested cat feces, and deep-fried scorpion are all on the menu for our examination of food preferences, delicacies, taboos and other cultural engagements with food. At first glance, the ingredients may seem quite bizarre. Yet no matter how unusual the foods or method of preparation, the simple acts surrounding eating are intricately linked to culture, identity, politics, economics, and so much more. Through in-class activities, group work, and illustrated lectures (including segments from hit TV shows 'Bizarre Foods' and 'Without Reservation') this course examines "bizarre foods" and the cultural links they involve.

We will examine foods in our own 'backyard' – you'll learn the ingredients of a Twinkie, explore local meat production, and reflect on how bread and wine transform into 'body and blood'. We will consider hunger, cannibalism, and dumpster-diving 'freegans'; and explore ways that people from Amherst to Zamboanga are working to preserve their food cultures.

In addition to introducing you to a range of bizarre foods from around the globe, this course provides training in core anthropology concepts and key research skills. These core concepts are central to an understanding of anthropology, and by the semester's end you'll have a strong command of these cornerstones of anthropological thought and practice. The key research skills will be of use in other classes, within and beyond anthropology.

You will research and organize a presentation for a campus-wide 'Bizarre Food Fair' to be hosted by our class at the end of the semester. You'll be encouraged (but not required) to find, try, and share 'bizarre foods' in the Amherst area.

## Learning Objectives

This course meets two GenEd designations – Social and Behavioral Sciences and Global Diversity. After taking this course you will:

- Understand four fundamental (core) anthropology concepts and how these frame anthropological inquiry
- Reinforce key research skills and gain hands-on experience applying core anthropology concepts to food-related research questions
- Recognize the diversity of foods and foodways in locations around the world. Trace similarities among these diverse food practices and find areas of shared experience in your own life (and be able to understand the complex reasons for any differences that exist)
- Recognize the benefits of preserving diverse food cultures globally. Identify barriers groups face in doing so

- Improve oral and written communication skills and increase ability to critically evaluate your own and others' research and writing
- Improve your ability to work collaboratively and conduct research among a group

The GenEd learning objectives for the course are listed in the table below along with an explanation of how we will meet these objectives in the course.

<i>Content</i>	<i>Critical Thinking</i>	<i>Communication</i>	<i>Connections</i>
Address fundamental questions, ideas, and methods of analysis in the humanities and social sciences. You will do this through weekly core concepts in anthropology writing assignments.	Develop creative, analytical, quantitative, and critical thinking through inquiry, problem solving, and synthesis. You will do this through daily in-class assignments in which you consider how foods from cultures across the globe	Develop skills in communicating persuasively and effectively orally and in writing. You will do this by conducting research on a food topic, preparing a public research poster or other product that highlights your work, and giving an oral presentation about the research at the food fair.	Gain experience applying and integrating methods of analysis in the social sciences to real world problems and contexts. You will do this in your written work and your food fair research by considering the impacts of globalization on heritage foods and peoples' efforts to preserve their food traditions.
	Develop pluralistic perspective-taking and awareness of the relationship among culture, self, and others. You will do this in each class period through comparative analysis of the foods people in cultures around the world, finding similarities between them and with yourself.	Develop skills in working effectively and collaboratively (in groups, across perspectives). You will do this by working to plan and carry out a bizarre food fair final project with your class colleagues. You will work as a team to help organize the food fair and determine how it will be organized.	Develop pluralistic perspective taking and an awareness of the relationship among culture, self, and others. You will do this regularly as you consider and discuss the ways peoples' food experiences around the globe compare to each other and to your own.

### **Instructor Information**

Dr. Sonya Atalay

Office: 202 Machmer Hall. Office Hours: Tuesdays 9:30-11:30

Mailbox: 201 Machmer Hall Phone: 413-545-2652 Email : [satalay@anthro.umass.edu](mailto:satalay@anthro.umass.edu)

### **Required Books and Reading**

-- Adventures in Eating: Anthropological Experiences in Dining from Around the World. Authors: Helen Haines and Clare Sammells (2010)

-- Consuming the Inedible: Neglected Dimensions of Food Choice. Authors: Jeremy MacClancy, Jeya Henry, and Helen Macbeth (2007)

All other readings will be available through Moodle. If you do not see a particular reading, please notify me by email.

## Points, Grading, and Requirements

### Grading

Preparation & participation	130 points
Core Concept pages	70 points each x 3 (210 points total)
Research Skill Reports	70 points each x 3 (210 points total)
Midterm Exam	200 points
Bizarre Food Fair	250 points total
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TOTAL COURSE POINTS	1000

### Points to Grade

A = 930 – 1000
A- = 900 – 929
B+ = 870 – 899
B = 830 – 869
B- = 800 – 829
C+ = 770 - 799
C = 730 - 769
C- = 700 - 729
D+ = 670 - 699
D = 630 - 669
F =< 629

**Preparation and Participation (130 points)** Since a large portion of our class time will involve discussion, group work, and brief writing activities related to the assigned readings, it is critical that you come to class prepared to engage with your colleagues about the readings and lecture material. You are expected to read the assigned material prior to class and come prepared for in-class activities in which you will consider and compare material from the readings and class lecture material. It is evident when a student has not done the reading. To get an 'A' in this class you must do the reading and participate on a regular basis in class discussion. If you skip multiple classes, are consistently unprepared or don't regularly engage in discussion you will receive low points for preparation and participation and it will have a negative impact on your grade.

**Research Skills and Core Concepts Assignments (420 points total)** In the course description you will notice that, in addition to introducing you to a range of bizarre Foods from around the globe, this course is designed to provide you with training in core anthropology concepts and research skills. The core anthropology concept topics we focus on (there are 3) are central to your understanding of the discipline. You will encounter these concepts repeatedly in any future anthropology courses you take; and by the end of this course you will have a strong command of these cornerstones of anthropological thought and practice. The Research Skills (3 in total) you learn in this course will be of use in other classes; those in anthropology and beyond. They will serve you well in nearly any future career, and once mastered, they form the basis for life-long learning in any discipline

Throughout the semester we will focus on one of these research skills or core anthropology concepts. During class meetings, you will gain experience with these skills/concepts through individual and group activities. The syllabus lists the due dates and corresponding skills/concepts assignments. Specific assignments vary, but in all cases, the assignment requires you to submit a 1-2 page MAXIMUM report. Your 1-2 page reports are due in class. **I will not accept late reports – you will receive a 0 if you do not submit the report on time. No exceptions!** If you are absent on the day the report is due, you will need to arrange to submit the report to my office mailbox (200 Machmer Hall) the same day the report is due, by 10:30am or I will not accept it.

**Midterm Exam (200 points total)** There will be a take-home midterm exam that will consist of multiple choice, fill in the blank, and essay questions. Your essay responses should be **typed and printed out, NOT written by hand.** **The exam will be passed out in class on Thursday, February 27 and will be due in class on Tuesday, March 4.** The exam will focus on material presented in lecture, the readings, and during class discussions. To do well on the exam, you will need to be able to provide examples from the readings. I suggest you develop the following practice: as you are reading the course material each week, write a brief summary of each article (less than a paragraph is usually enough) and familiarize yourself with the author's name and date. These notes will be useful for your midterm exam and for your final project (bizarre food fair research poster). Important note: The midterm will also include questions/problems related to the research skills and core concepts.

**Food Fair Research Report** As you prepare your research and presentation for the bizarre food fair, you will have an opportunity to present your preliminary results to the class and to share a draft of your product (poster, wikipedia, video, etc.). I've set aside three class periods (**April 15, 17, and 22**) in which each of you will provide your classmates with a report of your research. You will have **2-3 minutes** to present your research and will then receive

feedback from your classmates and me. Consider the research you present a DRAFT and plan to use our feedback to improve your research poster. Students who prepare a near to complete draft of their poster and then revise it based on feedback have consistently received better grades on this final project. Writing, revising and rewriting are key aspects of excellent research and scholarly work so they are important skills to learn and practice. On the day you are assigned to present, you must bring your **1-slide powerpoint presentation on a memory stick**. We will load these on my computer at the start of class.

**Bizarre Food Fair (250 points)** Through the semester you will conduct research on a bizarre food topic of your choice. The core concept and research skill papers will help you meet research goals over the course of the semester and will provide you with feedback on your ideas. **A 1-2 page abstract of your research project is due on Tuesday, Feb. 25 (Research Skill 1) and you must submit a detailed outline of your research project by the end of Week 10 (Thursday, April 3).** A preliminary annotated bibliography of your research sources is due on **Tuesday, March 25 (Research Skill 2)**. These deadlines are all noted in the weekly topics and assignment schedule below.

You will present your research at a 'Bizarre Food Fair', which our class will host for the entire UMass campus and Amherst community. The Food Fair is currently scheduled for **Thursday, April 24 at 5pm** location TBD. **You MUST attend to present your research. If you have a conflict with the date/time, let me know at the start of the semester.** The format for your bizarre food fair presentation is flexible, but **must** include a tangible product of some sort. Most students choose to produce a professional style research poster (using powerpoint to create a single slide that is printed on large poster size glossy paper), but you could choose to produce a Wikipedia page or YouTube video instead. **If you decide to create a product other than a professional style research poster, you will need to obtain my approval of the format first.** Come to discuss this with me in office hours **EARLY** in the semester.

You **CAN NOT** simply present a food and give details and facts about it. This is an inquiry-based research project. Your research will be based on a question that you are investigating and it should include several (at least two or more) of the core concepts that we've focused on each week. You are required to have a written bibliography page on hand along with your poster or other product during the bizarre food fair. Presenting one's research results is an important skill and one that takes effort to master. The best research presentations are engaging and invite the audience to become interested in the subject. I encourage you to be creative, imaginative, and entertaining, while you are factual and informative.

Although it's not required, I strongly urge you to have a bizarre food available at the fair. I will invite faculty and students from the Anthropology Department and the Commonwealth Honors College. You are also encouraged to invite friends, family, and other guests. Local newspapers and other media often attend and they enjoy trying the foods you bring and hearing students report on their research.

After the Bizarre Food Fair is over, you must submit a copy of your final presentation text and bibliography along with any digital material (video, powerpoint, Wikipedia page, etc) by **Thursday, May 1 @ 5pm** (upload the material to Moodle). In addition, you are required to submit a response paper (~2 pages) related to your Bizarre Food Fair presentation. Reflecting on your research and providing self-critique is a core aspect of good research practice. Therefore this assignment counts as one of your research skill reports – it is part of the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final research skill report. This report should reflect on the draft reports that your colleagues presented in class as well as your own experience of presenting your research at the Bizarre Foods Fair. What was most successful in your colleagues' presentations? What did you find most useful or interesting and how did you apply that to your own presentation/research? What didn't work well or where can they improve? What were the most interesting reactions from visitors to the Bizarre Food Fair? What worked, what was unclear or unanswered in your own presentation? How would you improve the product and/or presentation? **Research Skill 3** report must be submitted via email by **Thursday, May 1 @ 5pm**.

**Moodle** All students will have access to a Moodle page that includes a gradebook. You are welcome to post relevant announcements to the page.

**Academic Honesty** I encourage all students to discuss ideas with fellow classmates. However, I expect all your written assignments and exams to be completed alone. You are expected to abide by all of the rules of academic honesty presented in the [UMass Academic Honesty Policy](#) (web address below). If you have any concerns or questions about these guidelines, talk to me during office hours.

[http://www.umass.edu/dean\\_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

**Classroom Professionalism** I expect students to act in a professional manner while in class. This means **you should not check email, surf the net, read the newspaper**, habitually **arrive late, talk loudly** with classmates, or otherwise disrupt class. **Turn your cell phone off** while in class. If excessive violations occur, it will result in a reduction of your overall course grade.

### Weekly Topics and Assignment Schedule

#### Week 1

##### Readings For This Week

- 1) **Read this short article before our first class on Tuesday:** Horace Miner 1956 Body Ritual among the Nacirema, *American Anthropologist* 58:503-507 (online at: <https://www.msu.edu/~jdowell/miner.html>)
- 2) *Adventures in Eating*. Ch. 1 The Importance of Food and Feasting around the World. Pg. 1-20
- 3) *Consuming the Inedible*. Introduction. Pg. 1-15.
- 4) Rozin, Millman, and Nemeroff (1986) Operation of the Laws of Sympathetic Magic in Disgust and Other Domains. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 50(4): 703-712.

Tuesday, January 21: **Introduction** to topic and the course. Review syllabus, grading, and important dates.

Thursday, January 23: **Discussion of disgust in terms of what is “bizarre” and “inedible”**

##### Assignment

###### **Core Concept 1. Cultural bias, ethnocentrism, and self-reflexivity**

Choose one ingredient from this week’s lecture or readings and discuss the ways your cultural biases affect the way you view that food. A section of your paper should include a discussion on the role that self-reflexivity plays in addressing your bias. 1-2 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font. **Submit hardcopy in class Tuesday, Jan. 28.**

#### Week 2

##### Readings For This Week

- 1) *Consuming the Inedible*. Ch. 13 Eating Cat in the North of Spain in the Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Pg. 151-162.
- 2) *Adventures in Eating* Ch. 9 Eating Incorrectly in Japan (p. 167-180)

Tuesday, January 28      **Land and Water Animals**

Thursday, January 30      **Discussion of Land and Water Animals**

##### Assignment

###### **Core concept 2. Emic and Etic perspectives**

Consider the complexities of emic and etic perspectives. Has your choice of food for the Bizarre Food Fair been studied mostly from an emic or etic perspective? Or is it a combination of those two? How might our understanding of the food change if it were studied from an emic or etic perspective? What sorts of emic questions have researchers focused on? What aspects of the research process would change if there were more of an emic (or etic) perspective? What is the value of each perspective in terms of its scholarly contribution? What insights do we gain by understanding the food you've chosen from an insider's perspective? **Submit hardcopy in class Tuesday, Feb. 4.**

#### Week 3

##### Readings For This Week

- 1) *Adventures in Eating* Ch.3 *A Rat by any other Name*
- 2) *Adventures in Eating* Ch. 4 *The Delicacy of Raising and Eating Guinea Pig*
- 3) Pesticides Threaten Ant-Eating Tradition in Brazil. *New York Times* Jan. 4, 2011  
[http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/05/world/americas/05ants.html?\\_r=3&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha3](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/05/world/americas/05ants.html?_r=3&nl=todaysheadlines&emc=tha3)
- 4) *Consuming the Inedible* Ch. 14. (pg. 163-176) *Insects. Forgotten and Rediscovered as Food.*

Tuesday, February 4      **Rodents, Insects & Plants**

Thursday, February 6      **Discussion of Rodents, Insects & Plants**

#### Week 4

##### Readings for this week

- 1) Consuming the Inedible Ch. 7 and Ch. 9 (pg. 89-98 and 113-120) (Ch. 7 *Geophagia and Human Nutrition*, Ch. 9 *Lime as the Key Element*)
- 2) Adventures in Eating Ch. 8 (pg. 145-166) *MSG & Sugar*

Tuesday, February 11 **Twinkie, Deconstructed (watch from home: 1 hour video of Steve Ettlinger tracing the ingredients of the Twinkie: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6vk5em4k-0>)**

Thursday, February 13 **Anthropology Librarian on Using library research resources + Discussion of Minerals**

##### Assignment

###### **Locating relevant sources of data and information**

Using online library search tools, locate 5 sources related to your topic of choice for the bizarre food fair. Bring to class a list if at least 5 academic. Include the library database or search tool you used to locate it (this is NOT a link to the article but the library research tool you used to find this source). Be prepared to discuss the sources you've located thus far. Why are they relevant (or not) to your question or area of interest? What aspect of your topic are you having trouble finding sources for? You do not need to read the articles, but should skim the sources you find to see if the research question you have in mind is addressed in the article. Bring the list to class on Tues., Feb. 20 and be prepared to discuss the state of your research thus far.

**Submit hardcopy with Research Skill 1 on Feb. 25**

#### Week 5

##### Readings for this week

- 1) Consuming the Inedible Ch. 12 and Ch. 18 (pg. 141-150 and 215-222) (*Ch. 12 Eating Garbage* and *Ch. 18 The Use of Waste Products in the Fermentation of Alcoholic Beverages*)
- 2) Moodle>Resources: *Feral Foragers: Scavenging and Recycling Food Resources*. Chapter 9 (p. 287-322) in *The Revolution Will Not Be Microwaved: Inside America's Underground Food Movements* by Sandor Katz 2006
- 3) Moodle>Resources: *In Bad Taste* by M. Marcone, p. 13-48 (Scat coffee) and p.73-95 (Goat Dung oil)

Tuesday, February 18 **No Class – UMass Monday**

Thursday, February 20 **Leftovers: Feces, Freegans, and other waste products. BRING list of 5 sources with you to class today and be prepared to discuss your research progress thus far! + Prof. Atalay will provide expectations for Bizarre Food Fair research poster.**

##### Assignment

###### **Research skill 1. Writing a Research Abstract for your Bizarre Food Fair Presentation**

Write a 1-2 page abstract of your bizarre food fair research topic. The research subject and question is up to you, but it must be a bizarre food-related subject (ingredient, process, or practice). Your abstract should include a thesis statement or research question and include the topics or points of investigation for your research poster. **You must include your bibliography of at least 5 academic sources with your research skill report. Submit hardcopy in class Tuesday, Feb. 25.**

#### Week 6

##### Readings for this week

- 1) Moodle>Resources: *Hunting the Ancestors: Death and Alliance in Wari' Cannibalism*. Beth Conklin (1995) in *Latin American Anthropology Review* 5(2): 65-70
- 2) Consuming the Inedible Ch. 15 (pg. 177-188) *Eating Snot: Socially Unacceptable but Common, Why?*
- 3) Moodle>Resources: *First Catch Your Man* (Chapter 20) in *Consuming Culture* by Jeremy MacClancy (p.167-178)
- 4) *In Search of Human Placentophagy*, by Sharon Young and Daniel Benyshek (2010). *Ecology of Food and Nutrition* 49: 467-484.

Tuesday, February 25 **Human: Cannibalism, Breastmilk and Placenta**

Thursday, February 27 **Hand out Midterm (Due Tuesday, March 4) + Discussion of Cannibalism, Breastmilk, and Placenta**

### Week 7

#### Readings for this week

- 1) Moodle>Resources: Beyond Bread and Circuses: Professional Competitive Eating (2007) by Lawrence C. Rubin in *Food for Thought* edited by Lawrence Reuben (p.248-264)
- 2) Moodle>Resources: *Aspects of Health, Hype, and Identity in Bottled Water* (2009) by Nina Etkin. In *Foods of Association*.

Tuesday, March 4 **MIDTERM DUE! Food Quantity and Quality**

Thursday, March 6 **Discussion of Food Quantity and Quality**

### Week 8

#### Readings for this week

- 1) Moodle>Resources: Passing Time: The Ironies of Food in Prison Culture, (2007) by Jim Thomas in *Food for Thought*
- 2) Moodle>Resources: Molecular Gastronomy: A New Emerging Scientific Discipline, (2010) by Peter Barham et al., *Chemical Review* 110: p. 2313–2365

Tuesday, March 11 **Food Preparation and Cooking**

Thursday, March 13 **Discussion of Food Preparation and Cooking**

#### Assignment

##### Research skill 2. *Evaluating and properly citing research literature*

Prepare a preliminary annotated bibliography for your Bizarre Food Fair project with at least 10 references and brief descriptions (1-2 sentences for each) stating why it's relevant to your project. **Submit in class Tuesday, March 25**

### SPRING BREAK: March 17-21 NO CLASS.

### Week 9

#### Readings for this week

- 1) State of Hunger. Blog post by Natalie Sylvester.  
<http://anthropologyworks.com/index.php/2012/10/12/state-of-hunger-food-insecuritys-place-in-anthropology-2/>
- 2) Moodle>Resources: Clean Your Plate. There are People Starving in Africa!" The Application of Archaeology and Ethnography to America's Food Loss Issues (2006) by Timothy W. Jones
- 3) Moodle>Resources: *Noodle Narratives, Introduction*. By Frederick Errington, Deborah Gewertz, and Tatsuro Fujikuro (2012) p.1-10.

Tuesday, March 25 **Hunger & Chocolate** Screening of 'Nothing Like Chocolate'

Thursday, March 27 **Discussion of Hunger, Fretrade & Engaged Anthropology**

#### In-Class Assignment for March 27

##### Engaged Anthropology: *Making research relevant to world problems*

Consider your bizarre food fair topic and discuss how anthropological research related to that food/practice is (or might be made relevant for) solving real world problems. **Present your thoughts in class Thurs. March 27**

### Week 10

Tuesday, April 1 **Food Production: Watch Food, INC. documentary** <http://vimeo.com/23607359>

Thursday, April 3 **Discussion of Food Production**

#### Assignment

Write a detailed outline of your Food Fair product/presentation you are developing. **Due in class Thursday, April 3**

### Week 11

Readings for this week

- 1) Consuming the Inedible Ch. 4 (Food Definitions and Boundaries: Eating Constraints and Human Identities (p. 53-66)
- 2) Moodle>Resources: Leaving Home: One Girl's Story. Introduction in '*Exotic Appetites*' by Lisa Heldke (p. xi-xxx)
- 3) Moodle>Resources: The Quest for Novelty. In *Exotic Appetites* by Lisa Heldke (p. 9-22)
- 4) Adventures in Eating Ch. 5 (Termites tell the Tale) (pg. 79-100)

Tuesday, April 8 **Globalization, Identity and Heritage Foods**

Thursday, April 10 **Discussion of Globalization, Identity and Heritage Foods**

### Assignment

#### **Core concept topic 3. Globalization and Colonization (effects on bizarre foods)**

Consider negative and positive effects of globalization/colonization on the Bizarre Food Fair item you've chosen. Your focus can be on the item itself, or on the effects of globalization/colonization for a particular cultural group that consumes or produces the item. Are there connections with your topic to issues of identity and the heritage food movement?

**Submit hardcopy in class Tuesday, April 15**

### Week 12

Tuesday, April 15 **Research Report: Present DRAFT research poster**

**Remember: Bring your powerpoint slide to class on a memory stick.**

Thursday, April 17 **Research Report: Present DRAFT research poster.**

**Remember: Bring your powerpoint slide to class on a memory stick**

### Week 13

Readings for this week

- 1) Moodle>Resources: Margaret Visser (1991) No Offence (Ch. 5) and Postscript: How Rude are We? In *The Rituals of Dinner*.

Tuesday, April 22 **Research Report: Present DRAFT research poster.**

**Remember: Bring your powerpoint slide to class on a memory stick.**

Thursday, April 24 **Table Manners**

### Assignment

#### **Research Skill 3: Research Evaluation and Critique**

**Part 1:** Reflect on the preliminary research reports you heard in class over the past two weeks. What was effective? What didn't work well? Are there particular aspects of your colleague's approach, design, presentation style that you liked/disliked? Which articles or discussion points were missing or would have improved the presentation? Explain how you applied these critical reflections to your own Bizarre Food Fair product or presentation. **Part 2:** Utilizing the questions and feedback you received from colleagues and other visitors during the Bizarre Food Fair, reflect on what you feel was most interesting and effective about your research product, and what was least clear and needs further explanation or improvement. You should also note the steps you would take to incorporate the changes for future presentations. **Submit to me via email by Thursday, May 1.**



**Week 14**

Readings for this week

1) Adventures in Eating (Pg. 277-280) *Section V – The Last Course. Edibles and Ethnic Boundaries, Globalization and Guinea*

Tuesday, April 29 **Food for Thought - Summing things up**

**\*\*Thursday, April 24, 5pm 3<sup>rd</sup> UMass Bizarre Food Fair \*\* (arrive by 4:45 to set up)**