

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Discipline: History

Semester and Year: Fall 2006

Course Number and Title: The Ancient Technology of Food

Faculty Name: Dr. Mark Peterson

Suggested Pre-requisites:

No Previous classes in History or Archeology are required to take this class.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Technological advancements in obtaining and preparing food have been central to the growth of human populations and the development of their complex societies. Using both historical and archeological studies, this course will look at the importance of food and the technology of food in shaping culture from the Neolithic period of early agriculture to the great empires of Asia and Europe. Rather than being mere trivia, the issues surrounding food will help us gain a much better understanding of past cultures by providing us the chance to examine such important topics as the role of grains in uniting empires; the significance of food in myth and ritual; the connection between crop production and military forces; and the position of alcoholic beverages in diet and celebration. We will also discuss the historical significance of food as seen in the surviving cultural elements of ancient food production and preparation in present societies.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By completing this course, students will learn:

The methods historians and archeologists use to develop their explanations for the uses of food in past cultures.

The methods of agriculture in the ancient world and their importance to the development of civilizations.

The role of food in shaping cultural identity, including the details of some important examples in Asia and Europe.

The ways in which the trade in food has brought the global cultures into closer communication and exchange.

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OUTLINE OF THE COURSE: THE ANCIENT TECHNOLOGY OF FOOD

Unit I. Introduction

1. The Technology of Food: Beginning with Agriculture
2. Domestication
3. Irrigation & Civilization

Unit II. Eastern Asia

4. Millet, Rice & Soy
5. Fishing
6. Tea
7. Vegetable Gardening
8. Cooking & Feasting
9. ESSAY EXAM

Unit III. Southern Asia

10. The Spice Trade
11. Dairy Products
12. Sweets
13. Rules & Rituals
14. Islam's Agricultural Revolution
15. ESSAY EXAM

Unit III. Mediterranean

16. Prohibited Foods
17. Baking & Brewing
18. Wine
19. Olives
20. Preservation
21. Bringing Ancient Traditions Together
22. FINAL

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FIELD COMPONENT: Twenty percent of the contact hours for the course is provided by field work ashore. That work can be done independently as part of your cultural reports, but there are many situations where a practicum will give you special insight into your observations. For the reports, you will need to take extensive notes on food practices and traditions in three of the countries on our itinerary. You will also need to seek out multiple examples of food selling, preparation, and eating as part of these reports.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Participation	10%
Essay Exams	45% (15% each)
Field Reports	45% (15% each)

Participation includes things such as attendance, attentiveness in class, preparation (including doing the reading assignments on time), punctuality, and involvement in discussion.

For the essay exams you will be asked to write several paragraphs defining and identifying the significance of your choices from a list of terms. Then you will write a longer essay in response to a specific question chosen from a list of essay topics.

The cultural reports are to be based on your individual observations of food in different places. You should turn in the notes of what you find as you investigate local practices, as well as an essay that shows your interpretation of what food can tell us about the specific culture. The topic of the first report is the marketing of food. This should include your findings on the growing and selling of food, especially the foods of ancient history that we have discussed in class and their role in contemporary society. Your second report should discuss the preparation and eating traditions surrounding ancient foods in a different culture as observed in restaurants or homes. For the final report, you should examine the role of modern trade and technology in altering the eating traditions of another culture with special attention to how those changes reflect deeper changes in local society.

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ORDER FORM FOR REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

The required reading consists of selected articles that can be purchased as a course reader or accessed through either library reserve or the course site on the ship's intranet.

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RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Felipe Fernandez-Armesto
TITLE: *Near a Thousand Tables: A History of Food*
PUBLISHER: Free Press
ISBN #: 0-7432-2740-9
DATE/EDITION: 2002
COST: \$ 9.50

AUTHOR: Reay Tannahill
TITLE: *Food in History*
PUBLISHER: Three River Press
ISBN #: 0-517-88404-6
DATE/EDITION: 1988
COST: \$ 16.95

AUTHOR: Kenneth F. Kiple (ed.)
TITLE: *The Cambridge World History of Food*
PUBLISHER: Cambridge University Press
ISBN #: 0-521-40216-6
DATE/EDITION: 2000
COST: \$ 210

AUTHOR: Alan Davidson (ed.)
TITLE: *The Oxford Companion to Food*
PUBLISHER: Oxford University Press
ISBN #: 0-192-11579-0
DATE/EDITION: 1999
COST: \$ 65