

**DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

www.mlcs.ualberta.ca

**2015-2016 SPAN 332: The Culture of Food  
(Fall Term)**

Instructor: Russell Cobb

Time: 3:30-4:50 TR

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Place: HC 1-3

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or by appointment

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**Course Prerequisite:** SPAN 300 or SPAN 306

**Course-based Ethics Approval** in place regarding all research projects that involve human testing, questionnaires, etc.?

Yes       No, not needed, no such projects approved

**Community Service Learning** component

None

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students' Union  
<http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course is a wide-ranging survey of the culture of food in Spanish-America, with a special focus on how foodways have constructed national identities (especially in Mexico, Cuba, and Argentina) while also undermining the stability of the Nation through hybrid dishes (the Korean taco, the “taco árabe,” McDonalds, etc.). Foodways will be explored through literary expressions, cinema, historical

documents, and contemporary non-fiction. Topics will include cannibalism, colonialism, multiculturalism, and gender roles. Class time will be devoted to the discussion of texts—movies, art, literature, etc.—in relation to their historical, political, and social contexts in Spanish. The active participation of students in debates and discussions is fundamental. Class presentations, readings, and discussions will be conducted in Spanish with the occasional divergence into English or Spanglish.

**Objectives:**

- Strengthen written and oral Spanish.
- Strengthen research skills.
- Produce a work of depth that showcases your expertise in one aspect of Spanish-American foodways

**Texts:**

All readings will be posted in pdf or hyperlinks through Google Docs. You do not need to pay for any texts but you must print out all readings and bring them to class. **This is required.** You can recycle the readings later, but a few trees will have to be sacrificed on the altar of pedagogically sound higher education!!!

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

**Term work: 100%**

Two exams 30% (15% each)

Two essays 30% (15% each)

Blog entries: 13% (approximately 10)

Class participation: 13% (INCLUDES IN-CLASS WRITING ASSIGNMENTS and group work. If you don't do them, you will be marked down. Only 80% of life is showing up.)

Group presentation: 14%

Details about course work:

**Exams 15% each (#1, October 13; #2 November 26)**

Exams will test how well you have understood course material. There are no essays. Questions (fill in the blank, short answer) will come DIRECTLY from readings and class discussion.

**Essays 15% each (#1, September 29; #2 December 7)**

Unlike the exams, essays test your analytical and creative ability to draw connections and expound on ideas generated from class. Essay #1 is 3.5 pages (800 words) and requires some basic research. Essay #2 is four pages (1000 words) and requires a little more research. They must be written in Spanish (25% of your mark on the essays comes from your mastery of the language) and must be double-spaced, 12-point type in Times New Roman font.

**Blog entries 13% (Various dates)**

A course blog will be set up through Tumblr in which students will post their reactions to course material. This will be evaluated on a credit/no credit basis.

**Class Participation 13% (Various dates)**

Woody Allen once said that 80% of life is just showing up. If you just show up every day, you will get 80% of this grade. To get 100% you must not only show up but actively participate in group work and in-class writing assignments. Every unexcused absence after two will result in a 10% per day reduction of this part of the grade.

**Group Presentation 14% (Various dates)**

[Please read this post!!!](#) It applies to every presentation you will ever do. You will lose points for going over your 20 minute time limit. Practice, people. I will show you an exemplary presentation so there is no doubt about how I evaluate this part of the grade.

**Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University calendar.”

***Academic Integrity:***

“The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca/en/CodesofConductandResidenceCommunityStandards/Cod eofStudentBehaviour.aspx> ) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment safe and free of discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels this policy has been or is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that directs discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the student ombudservice (<http://www.ombudservice.ualberta.ca/>).

Information about the University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures is described in UAPPOL at

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Pages/DispPol.aspx?PID=110> .

***Academic Honesty:***

**All students** should consult the information provided by the [Office of Judicial Affairs](#) regarding avoiding cheating and plagiarism in particular and academic dishonesty in general (see the [Academic Integrity Undergraduate Handbook](#) and [Information for Students](#)). If in doubt about what is permitted in this class, ask the instructor.

**Students involved in language courses and translation courses** should be aware that on-line “translation engines” produce very dubious and unreliable “translations.” **Students in languages courses** should be aware that, while seeking the advice of native or expert speakers is often helpful, **excessive editorial and creative help** in assignments is considered a form of “cheating” that violates the code of student conduct with dire consequences. Having someone translate your paper is cheating. Period.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study.

***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections 23.3(1) and 23.5.6 of the University Calendar. Be aware that more than two unexcused absences will result in a 10% reduction of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component of the course for each day missed. Late assignments will also be reduced by 10% for each working day they are late.

**In this course, attendance is evaluated by your presence in the classroom, your active participation in classroom discussions, and presence in online forums. Sleeping, texting, facebooking, and eating in class will reduce your participation grade. See above for exact policies. Participation will also be assessed by preparation for discussion.**

***Policy for Late Assignments:***

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension just one time throughout the course with no penalty. **Excuses given after the due date will not be accepted for any reason. Assignments handed in late will be deducted 10% per each working day they are handed in late.**

***Grading:***

Marks for assignments, tests, and exams are given in percentages, to which letter grades are also assigned, according to the table below (“**MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale**”). The percentage mark resulting from the entire term work and examination then produces the final letter grade for the course.

**“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”**

Letter	%	Pts	Descriptor
A+	95-100%	4.0	<b>Outstanding:</b> Superior performance showing understanding and knowledge of the subject matter far exceeding expectations.
A	90-94%	4.0	<b>Excellent:</b> Superior performance showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter.
A-	86-89%	3.7	<b>Very good:</b> Clearly above average performance with complete knowledge of subject matter.
B+	82-85%	3.3	<b>Very good</b>
B	75-81%	3.0	<b>Good:</b> average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete.
B-	70-74%	2.7	<b>Good</b>
C+	66-69%	2.3	<b>Satisfactory:</b> Basic understanding of the subject matter
C	61-65%	2.0	<b>Satisfactory</b>
C-	58-60%	1.7	<b>Satisfactory</b>
D+	55-57%	1.3	<b>Minimal Pass:</b> Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.

D	50-54%	1.0	<b>Minimal Pass:</b> Marginal performance; generally insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.
F	0-49%	0.0	<b>Fail:</b> Unsatisfactory performance or failure to meet course requirements.

## Daily Work Schedule

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1 Septiembre, Martes

En clase

- Introducción al curso, al profesor, a los estudiantes.
- Leer “Como se come una guayaba” en clase

Para hacer en casa:

- Leer “Delightful, Delicious, Disgusting” por Carolyn Korsmeyer
  - Leer, “Como se come una guayaba” otra vez
  - Escribir un párrafo describiendo cómo se come tu fruta favorita. Prepara el párrafo para leerlo en clase jueves
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3 Septiembre, Jueves

En clase:

- Discutir Korsmeyer
- Leer y discutir los párrafos de los estudiantes
- Empezar el artículo de Barthes en clase

Para hacer en casa:

- Leer Roland Barthes, "Por una Psico-Sociología de la Alimentación Contemporánea."
    - Piensa en el último párrafo sobre el café. En los países latinoamericanos, ¿el café es una sustancia o circunstancia o los dos? Y para ti, ¿qué es?
- 

8 Septiembre

En clase:

- Discutir los temas sugeridos de Barthes sobre la comida y la cultura
- Empezar a hablar sobre el colonialismo y la cultura en las Américas (crónicas, encomiendas, etc.)
  - Empezar con Oviedo

Para hacer en casa:

- terminar la lectura de Oviedo
  - ¿Por qué le interesa tanto a Oviedo la piña?

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10 septiembre

En clase:

- hablar sobre las presentaciones en grupo. Seleccionar temas y grupos
- discutir colonialismo y la comida

Para hacer en casa:

- Leer “prólogo” y “justificación” del documento “Pueblo de maíz. La cocina ancestral de México.”
    - a escribir ¿hay una patrimonial gastronómica de tu país? ¿Cuál es y qué dice esa comida sobre la cultura de tu país?
- 

15 septiembre

En clase:

- hablar sobre el proyecto final en Genius.com
- discutir nacionalismo y comida. El caso de México.
- ver un video de Diana Kennedy hablando sobre México y la comida
  - discutir este video

Para hacer en casa:

- Leer Jeffrey Pilcher, “¡Tacos, Joven!” hasta página 112, la sección “El aburguesamiento del taco”
- 

17 septiembre

En clase:

- Más sobre la identidad mexicana y los tacos (lecture)
- Terminar el artículo de Pilcher
- Discutir ensayo #1 (fecha límite: 29 septiembre)

Presentación #1. Tema:

Estudiantes

En casa:

- Terminar de leer J. Pilcher, “¡Tacos, Joven!”
- empezar a pensar en los ensayos

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22 septiembre

En clase:

- Ver partes de películas/canciones de la comida mexicana
- empezar Laura Esquivel, *Como agua para chocolate*

En casa:

- ponte al día con las lecturas que faltan.

Presentación #2 Tema

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24 septiembre

En clase:

- ¿preguntas sobre el ensayo?
- discusión de *Como agua para chocolate*.
- una parte de la película

En casa:

- Terminar capítulo 1 de *Como agua para chocolate*
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29 septiembre

Fecha límite para ensayo #1. Clase se reúne en la taquería Tres Carnales (next to Central LRT).

Note: Go enjoy some tacos. But also look around the restaurant. Write up what you see, hear, taste, and smell. Look at the food, the decor, the customers, the t-shirts of the employees. What image of Mexico is being represented? How does this scene reflect--or depart from--what Pilcher describes? Write your thoughts in journal form (no more than 600 words) so we can discuss next class day.

En casa:

- Leer capítulo 2 de *Como agua para chocolate*
- 

1 octubre

En clase:

- reacciones a Los Tres Carnales



- discusión de ch.2 de *Como agua para chocolate*

En casa:

- leer Sarah Bak-Geller Corona, “Los recetarios “afrancesados” del siglo XIX en México.
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6 octubre

En clase:

- Discutir los “afrancesados” del siglo XIX.
- empezar Sandra Cisneros, “No te cases con un mexicano”

En casa:

- terminar Cisneros, “No te cases con un mexicano”
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8 octubre

En clase:

- Discusión de Cisneros
- Revisión del material del curso para primer examen

En casa:

- revisar el curso para el examen.
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13 octubre

- primer examen en clase

en casa:

- Leer Meredith E. Abarca, “Culinary Encounters in Latino/a Literature”
  - escribir unas reflexiones sobre el Thanksgiving canadiense en el blog
- 

15 octubre

En clase:

- discutir la lectura y la cultura del Thanksgiving
- empezar con “transculturación cubana”

En casa:

- leer Fernando Ortiz, “DEL FENÓMENO SOCIAL DE LA “TRANSCULTURACIÓN” Y DE SU IMPORTANCIA EN CUBA.” y “LOS FACTORES HUMANOS DE LA CUBANIDAD”
    - pon atención a la idea del “ajiaco” al final del segundo ensayo.
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20 octubre

En clase:

- Continúa con las ideas de: transculturación, ajiaco, y cubanidad

En casa:

- Leer Antonio José Ponte, “Las Comidas Profundas”
  - Leer, Gustavo Pérez Firmat, “Bilingual Blues” (read ALL the selections from the book I have downloaded)
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22 octubre

En clase:

- Discutir más sobre literatura, comida, y Cuba
- Ver parte de *Fresa y chocolate*

En casa:

- Ver La última cena de Gutiérrez Alea aquí:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g\\_CPbHIgnF4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g_CPbHIgnF4)
  - Escribir en el blog sobre la conexión entre la cena, la religión, y la comida
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27 octubre

En clase

- Discutir La última cena y papel y la esclavitud, basado en la caña de azúcar

Presentación sobre Azúcar.

Estudiantes.

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29 octubre

Carne

Esteban Echevarria, “El matadero”

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3 noviembre

Carne

Virgilio Piñera, “Carne”

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5 noviembre

Class excursion #2.

Carne ---canibalism

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10, 12 noviembre

- no hay clase por Reading Week
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17-19 noviembre

Comiendo con los chilenos...

Neruda--eating in Hungary, various odes to food.

Allende--afrodita. Eat at a chilean place.

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24 noviembre

En clase:

repara para el examen #2

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26 noviembre

En clase:

Exam #2

En casa:

prepara ensayo #2

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December 3-6 set aside for individual conferences about last essay or anything else.

December 3: Class excursion #3

Final essay due at 5:00pm on December 7. Shared via Google Docs.

