# FSN 250 SYLLABUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>TITLE:</strong></th>
<th>FOOD AND NUTRITION: CUSTOMS AND CULTURE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>UNITS:</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CLASS HOURS:</strong></td>
<td>Mon., Wed. 2:10 PM to 4:00 PM in 52-A12</td>
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<td><strong>OFFICE HOURS:</strong></td>
<td>Mon. 4:10-6:00 PM; Tues., 4:10 PM – 5 PM; Wed. 4:10 – 5:00 PM; Thurs., 8:10 – 9:00 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTOR:</strong></td>
<td>Dr. Tom Neuhaus  Building 24, Room 105A  6-2240; <a href="mailto:tneuhaus@calpoly.edu">tneuhaus@calpoly.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TEXTBOOK:</strong></td>
<td>FSN250 Reader</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WEB SITE</strong></td>
<td><a href="http://www.fsn.calpoly.edu/tneuhaus/fsn250">http://www.fsn.calpoly.edu/tneuhaus/fsn250</a></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GRADING:</strong></td>
<td>Two midterms (20% each), one final (25%), fieldwork (10%), presentation (15%), and quizzes (10%)</td>
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**COURSE PHILOSOPHY:** In the spirit of our “new age”, during which cultures both fuse and fragment, the world’s population maintains its logarithmic growth and old systems of order no longer seem to control human destiny. For the sake of survival, it becomes increasingly important to understand human societies and cultures. In the past, the study of an intriguing question such as why humans eat what they eat was confined to single aspects—such as anthropology, history, sociology, foodways, geography, biology, or psychology. In this course, we will illuminate culturally based food beliefs and practices from a multitude of perspectives. Hopefully, we will develop an appreciation for human differences, the precariousness of our current situation, and the importance of developing tolerance and understanding.
CLASSES: This course consists of 17 lecture/discussions, each with associated reading assignment(s). The student is expected to do the reading before coming to class and to come prepared to participate in a discussion. Doing the reading means reading the chapter at least twice. The questions will serve partly as a basis for the midterms.

The second half of each lecture will consist of 50 minutes devoted to background information about the culture, followed by a 5-minute break and then a 55-minute discussion of the day’s reading.

EXAMS: The examinations are Scantron tests and the questions are True/False and multiple choice. Questions will focus on both halves of lecture—background material presented by the instructor, questions from the reading, and research questions. The final exam is longer than the midterms; its questions will be based on the questions from the two midterm exams.

EXTRA-CREDIT: Occasionally, the instructor will announce evening talks/panels that have something to do with culture. Students can earn up to 1 point (final percentage point) extra-credit by attending the talk and writing up a synopsis. Like all other academic submissions, these should be double-spaced, typewritten. No hand-written synopses will be accepted. This benefits both the student and the instructor, as occasionally assignments get lost and the student can just print it out again. Also, typewritten materials are a lot easier to read.

QUIZZES: Five quizzes will be given during the quarter, starting week two. If you miss a quiz (or an exam) due to illness, you must present a doctor’s excuse or some other formal university excuse in order to make it up.

STUDENT PRESENTATIONS: Starting Week Three (with Jewish Cooking) the first hour of each class will be run by a 5-student committee. Each student will answer two of the 10 questions; who answers what should be agreed upon by members of the committee. Students are encouraged to conduct a discussion with other members of the committee and with others in the class.

To answer each question, the student is expected to draw primarily from the reading. However, answers are not complete if terms are not understood. For example, in answering the question: “What rationale does Harris give for the Levite banning of camel meat?” the student should say something about the Levites. Who were they? When did they live?

The reading does not answer such questions, so the student presenter should find the answer using Google or some other reference material.

After the 5-member panel has covered the questions related to the reading, they then present the research question, which should be a group effort. By group effort is meant that each and every student in the group talks about some aspect of the problem. This can be presented using an overhead or a small Powerpoint presentation on a CD. Along with the presentation, the committee turns in a 2-3 page report on the research question. The report should have subheadings, and the student responsible for that section should type his or her name in the subheading.
Like any academic submission that analyzes a particular question using outside sources, this paper should be typewritten, double-spaced, with a bibliography and citations to the bibliographic references. *Failure to include a bibliography and citations will result in an automatic deduction of 20%.*

Here are some pointers for maximum effectiveness:

1) **Minimize** the amount of material displayed on the overhead or PowerPoint slide. The rule of thumb is: 6X6, which means 6 lines with a maximum of 6 words. Points will be deducted for not following this rule.

2) **Know your material:** you should be able to make your presentation without relying heavily on notes. Keep your handheld notes as brief as what you display.

3) **Stand straight:** do not slouch. Speak directly to the audience.

**FIELDWORK:** this 2-3 page assignment gives the student to do a little “real-world” research on his or her own. There are four possible approaches:

1), Write a food diary for one week consumption of food. Record what you eat, whom you ate it with, where, and other social context details. Finish with a half-page analysis of your eating habits (time of day; whom you ate with; how often you eat with the TV on) and the quality of your diet (meat content; whether you meet the 5-a-day USDA guideline; fast-food; and fats) and any other details you want to include.

2), Write up an interview with a senior citizen(s) in which you ask questions about what they ate 50 years ago, what family meals were like, what food ingredients were like, and how much food has changed since then;

3), Write up childhood food memories: what sorts of things you grew to like and dislike at an early age and why; superstitions that people have communicated to you about what to eat and when to eat; embarrassing moments at mealtime; what family meals were like during your childhood and how they have changed. Do not include details that you would be embarrassed to have read in class (names will not be mentioned.)

4), If you lived in another country at some point in your life and you have sufficient information, you could write up your observations about their diet, particularly the importance of social eating, of reciprocity (sharing), what foods are common fare, what foods are special (e.g. religious festivals), and any other observations that you would like to make.

**VIDEOS:** are provided to complement the readings and lecture. Tests will draw from the videos; it is expected that the student will take notes.

**WEB SITE:** the student’s attention is particularly directed to the course web site, which has some of the readings for which I was not able to obtain copyright permission. *These are only available on the web site.*
SUBJECT____________________________

Quality of presentation assessed on clarity, completeness, professional conduct, and quality of communication.  (1 = not acceptable; 3 = satisfactory; 5 = excellent).

Research question points assigned to individuals who participated in answering the question in class.

Questions 1 & 2  Name: ____________________________

1  2  3  4  5

Question:__________________________________________________________

Comments:  ________________________________________________________

Grade:  ____________________________________________________________

Questions 3 & 4  Name: ____________________________

1  2  3  4  5

Question:__________________________________________________________

Comments:  ________________________________________________________

Grade:  ____________________________________________________________

Questions 5 & 6  Name: ____________________________

1  2  3  4  5

Question:__________________________________________________________

Comments:  ________________________________________________________

Grade:  ____________________________________________________________
Questions 7 & 8

Name: ___________________________

1  2  3  4  5

Question: __________________________________________________________

Comments: ________________________________________________________

Grade: ____________________________________________________________

Questions 9 & 10

Name: ___________________________

1  2  3  4  5

Question: __________________________________________________________

Comments: ________________________________________________________

Grade: ____________________________________________________________

Research Question

1  2  3  4  5

Comments-1: _______________________________________________________

Comments-2: _______________________________________________________

Comments-3: _______________________________________________________ 

Comments-4: _______________________________________________________

Comments-5: _______________________________________________________ 

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<th>WK</th>
<th>DATES</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>01/05</td>
<td><strong>Introduction to FSN 250</strong> Multiple perspectives on &quot;You are what you eat&quot;</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>01/07</td>
<td><strong>Three Food Videos:</strong> Jewish cooking, Italian cooking, French cooking</td>
<td>No reading for this class</td>
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| 2  | 01/12  | **Indonesia and the spice trade.** Sympathetic magic and the absolute laws of contagion among the Hua of Papua New Guinea. | **Food as a Cultural Construction** (Meigs)  
**Phantom Cargo** (Harris)                                                                                           |
| 2  | 01/14  | **Native American Food and Culture** Desert plants and the O’odham of Southern Arizona | **Food, Health, and Native American Agriculture**  
(Nabhan)  
**Cherokee Indian Foods** (Chiltoskey)                                                                 |
| 3  | 01/19  | **NO CLASS TODAY—MLK DAY**                                              |                                                                                                                        |
| 3  | 01/21  | **Jewish Cooking:** Jewish customs and foods; brief history of Judaism  | **Deciphering a Meal**  
(Douglas)                                                                                                                      |
|     |        | **First Student Discussion Group**                                     |                                                                                                                        |
| 4  | 01/26  | **Arabic Cuisines:** Arabic Americans, brief history of Arabic peoples, Islam, foods and customs.  | **The Abominable Pig**  
(Harris)                                                                                                                     |
|     |        | **Second Student Discussion Group**                                     |                                                                                                                        |
| 4  | 01/28  | **Italian Food Culture** A study of Sardinia as a model of the cultural changes brought on by Capitalism.  | **Bread as World**  
(Counihan)                                                                                                               |
<p>|     |        | <strong>Third Student Discussion Group</strong>                                       |                                                                                                                        |</p>
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| 5  | 02/02 | French food and French culture in America  
Historical use of French food to add aristocratic meaning to the parvenus of American society.  
Fourth Student Discussion Group | Two Hundred Years of French Food in America (Levenstein) |
| 5  | 02/04 | German Food: closest to American food- high in salt, fat, and meat, with an abundant use of sugar and fat in treats and desserts.  
Fifth Student Discussion Group | Is Germany’s Traditional Restaurant a Dying Breed? (Spies & Weiss) |
| 6  | 02/09 | MIDTERM #1: first half of period  
The Concept of Cuisine: second half of period. Attendance will be taken. | The Structure of Cuisine (Rozin) |
| 6  | 02/11 | Chinese food and medicine: Confucian and humoral inputs to the current system which regards treatment in a holistic rather than iatrogenic way.  
Sixth Student Discussion Group | Traditional Medical Values of Food (Anderson) |
| 7  | 02/16 | NO CLASS: President’s Day | |
| 7  | 02/18 | Japanese Food Culture  
Seventh Student Discussion Group | Japanese Mothers and Obentos (Allison) |
| 8  | 02/23 | Hawaiian Foods: poi, poke, and aloha. But where are the Hawaiians?  
A culinary and economic history  
Eighth Student Discussion Group | Excerpts from the Food of Paradise (Laudan)  
See course web site |
| 8  | 02/25 | Latin-American Cultures  
two readings about Peruvian coffee and chocolate.  
Ninth Student Discussion Group | Peruvian Coffee (Shapera)  
Peruvian Chocolate (Neuhaus) |
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| 9  | 03/01  | African-American Cultures. A comparison of Ghanaian foodways and Southern cuisine  
 Fieldwork Due  
 Tenth Student Discussion Group | Ghana Report (Neuhaus)                                                  |
| 9  | 03/03  | Industrial Food and Technology: history of the development of agriculture and food processing.  
 Eleventh Student Discussion Group | Industrial Food (Goody)  
 The Golden Age of Food Processing (Levenstein) |
| 10 | 03/08  | Sustainable & Organic Agriculture: A Jeffersonian View of Agriculture. Modern movements to preserve farming as a family business, organic foods, sustainable agriculture, and community supported agriculture (CSA)  
 Twelfth Student Discussion Group | Making Sustainable Agriculture Work (Jackson)  
 Food, Farming and Democracy (Lappé) |
| 9  | 03/10  | MIDTERM #2: first half of period  
 Fast Food in America: second half | Fast Food Nation, Eric Schlosser |
|    | 03/16  | Final Exam 1:10 – 4:00 PM                                              |                                                                         |