Course Description
Food is one of the most critical, yet understudied, aspects of human experience. Most of us like to eat, and food is a tangible way in which we articulate our religious, ethical and moral selves. Religious values shape how we feast and fast, and feed the deities and feed ourselves. This course will explore the relationship between food and religion by (1) investigating food in the context of specific religious traditions, e.g., Hinduism; and (2) examining food as a moral and ethical category in religious and secular contexts, e.g., organic and locavore. Topics include, but are not limited to, food and ritual; food and religious ethics; religion, food and sustainability.

This course fits under the rubric of the humanities because it focuses on how people of the world’s different religious traditions understand food in its multiple capacities. This course explores the food-related myths, rituals, texts, and practices of different religious traditions, in the US and abroad; compares the role of food and eating, addressing topics such as ritual practice, health, relations between humans and the divine, morality/ethics, and sustainability; and demonstrates how food practices reflect and shape gender roles and social roles among and in-between diverse populations in the United States. It seeks to present an in-depth understanding of the language and concepts used by different traditions to define “food”. This course demonstrates the methodologies used in Religious Studies, including historical, textual, comparative, and ethnographic, and consciously reflects on how and why scholars choose these methods in their investigations.

Topic/Assignment

I. Introducing Religious Studies
This section will begin to define Religious Studies as a humanistic discipline, its unique theoretical and methodological perspectives, and its role in interdisciplinary studies. Lectures will introduce a number of key thinkers, perspectives, and terms that will be referred to throughout the semester.

II. Introducing Religion and Food
This section defines the sub-field of Religion and Food. Lectures and readings introduce key thinkers, perspectives, and terms that will be used throughout the semester. This section uses Miriam’s Kitchen: A Memoir to explore Jewish dietary practices in the context of twentieth century American religious history.
III. Food and Ritual
This section introduces the relationship between food and ritual practice, drawing on examples from Hinduism in India and the USA, Protestant denomination in the US Midwestern region, and indigenous traditions of the Americas. Students will learn about specific ritual practices and also how these rituals have changed in response to social and historical factors, e.g. immigration.

IV. Feasting and Fasting
This section introduces feasting and fasting in religious context and explores how individuals shape their religious, gender, and moral identities through these practices. This section draws upon examples from medieval Christianity, Hinduism in India and the USA, and twentieth century Scandinavia.

V. Food and Faith in the American South
This section traces the development of food cultures from Africa through the West Indies to the Low Country and addresses the relationship between food, religion, and social structures in the American South.

VI. Food and Our Moral Selves
This section explores how individuals use food and eating to shape their moral selves, including choices about the foods one eats as well as practices of food-related charity.

VII. Food, Religion, and Sustainability
This section explores the relationship between religion, food, and sustainable food systems, providing examples of religious response to agrarian crises. Examples include Zen Buddhism, US Catholicism, and Hinduism.

VIII. Religion, Food, and Social Change
This section explores the intersection of food, religion, and society, highlighting the role of food in the struggle for justice, equity, and opportunity. This sections compares alternative ideals about the United States using examples from Protestant Christianity, the Ojibwe, and the O’odham peoples.

IX. Final Conference

Student Learning Outcomes
Students will achieve proficiency in the skills listed below. They will be able to:

1. effectively communicate how different religious traditions understand relationship between religion and food;

2. explain how food practices reflect and shape gender roles and social roles among and in-between diverse populations;

3. analyze historical, mythical, and theological texts critically;

4. compare the role of food in different religious traditions in topics including ritual, health, morality/ethics, gender, and sustainability;

5. write analytically and comparatively about the broad themes and theories, as well as specific texts and cases, studied;

5. demonstrate understanding of the field of religion and food, including its origins and development; and

6. work collaboratively and in multidisciplinary teams on class projects.

**General Education Objectives**

**General Education Student Learning Outcomes (H and D)**

1. This course fulfills the Humanities (H) General Education Objective by providing instruction in the key themes, principles, and terminology of Religious Studies.

2. General Education Student Learning Outcomes for Humanities courses:

   a. The course will teach students about the history, underlying theory, and methodologies used in Religious Studies. Both in a separate introductory section on Religious Studies and throughout discussions of other issues and cases, course readings, lectures, and discussions will emphasize the history, theory and methodologies of Religious Studies and their relevance for Religion and Food.

   b. The course will provide students with background on the history, theory and methodologies used in Religious Studies, using case studies focused on the environment to illustrate approaches and issues. Readings, class discussions, and writing assignments will focus on developing the skills by which students can identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape the ways people think about both religion and nature.

   c. The class emphasizes clear and effective analysis, expressed both in class discussions and in written assignments. In reading, discussion, and writing, students will
be taught and encouraged to approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives, including diverse cultural and religious traditions as well as different theoretical frameworks within religious studies.

3. General Education Student Learning Outcomes

   a. To learn the history, underlying theory and methodologies used to analyze relations between religion and food as an interdisciplinary field of study;

   b. To identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape scholarly thinking about food and religion;

   c. To approach these issues from diverse disciplinary and theoretical perspectives;

   e. To communicate the information and analysis developed in this course in a clear, organized, and effective way in written work and in class discussions; and

   f. To understand how the intersection of religion and food in the context of the world’s diverse cultures and religious traditions.

4. This course fulfills the Diversity (I) General Education Objective by providing instruction in the attitudes, norms, and values of cultures that create cultural differences within the United States.

   These courses encourage you to recognize how social roles and status affect different groups and impact U.S. society. These courses guide you to analyze and to evaluate your own cultural norms and values in relation to those of other cultures, and to distinguish opportunities and constraints faced by other persons and groups

4. General Education Student Learning Outcomes for Diversity courses:

   a. This course will teach students about the core concepts, beliefs and practices of religious traditions in the United States. Through exploring the role of food and eating in religious traditions of the United States, students will understand how cultures exemplified by traditions including Hindus, different populations of Native Americans, multiple ethnic expressions of Protestants, and Catholics have contributed to diversity in the United States. This course explores how food practices reflect difference in religious expression among multiple populations, e.g. Protestant Christianity as understood and practiced among African Americans in the South and descendents of northern European immigrants in the Midwest.

   b. This course will demonstrate how food is a means to create and negotiate identity and hierarchy within and among religious communities, including racial, ethnic, and gender identity. For example, *Whitebread Protestants* explores how debates about communion practice in Midwestern churches reflected broader social anxieties about immigration and social change; articles by Nabhan and LaDuke demonstrate how food is central to (different) Native American identities and how food-related movements both
help these groups retain cultural continuity and regain control of food production and distribution.

c. This course will teach students about the opportunities and constraints faced by members of different religious traditions in the United States. For example, “There’s No Food Like Church Food” discusses the role of food in African American churches in the American South, and “We Shall Not Be Moved” addresses the role of food in the US Civil Rights Movement.

d. This course will teach students to evaluate and analyze multiple perspectives on religion, society and food, including their own.

Course Requirements and Assignments
All assignment must be completed to pass the course.

1. Attendance and participation in class discussions, including timely and close reading of all assigned texts, is required. Unannounced quizzes on readings may be included (5% of final grade).

2. Group project: Students will develop collaborative projects that demonstrate the relationship between religion and food in practical and demonstrable ways. Each group will choose a meal, e.g. Seder and will “decode” this meal, illustrating its religious, cultural, and social aspects. More detailed information will be provided early in the semester. Projects will be presented in poster/video format. (15% of grade).

3. Essays (40%)
   Two individual short essays (4-5 double-spaced pages, 1000 words each). The first draft should both be submitted to E-learning AND brought to class for feedback and discussion. First draft – 3 points; final version – 12 points.* Each essay will be worth 15% (or 15 points) of your final grade (30% total).
   The first paper will focus on Miriam’s Kitchen, and the second will respond to issues in the section ‘Food and Our Moral Selves.”

4. Midterm (25% of grade).

5. Take-home Essay
   This essay will integrate readings and material, focusing on the second half of the semester. (25%). The exam will be handed out on April 18 and is due on April 23.

*Consistent with the standards of the University Writing Requirement, the instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, usage of standard written English, clarity, coherence, and organization. (See below for grading rubric)
University Writing Requirement (formerly known as the Gordon Rule) –

This course counts for University Writing Rule 2 credit (2000 words).

The University Writing Requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. Course grades now have two components. To receive writing credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

The instructor will evaluate and provide feedback on the student's written assignments with respect to grammar, punctuation, usage of standard written English, clarity, coherence, and organization. Students will receive a grade and corrections on their work. Students will be graded according to the following rubric:

Assessment:
1.) What type of feedback will be provided to the student (in reference to writing skill)?

__X____Grade ___X__Corrections ______Drafts ______Other

2.) Will a published rubric be used? Yes (see below)

Grading Policies and Scale

Full information about UF’s grading policy, including credit for major, minor, General Education, and other requirements, is available at this website: http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html

The grade scale for this course is as follows:

A    93-100
A-   90-93
B+   87-89
B    84-86
B-   80-83
C+   77-79
C    74-76
C-   70-73
D+   67-69
D    64-66
D-   60-63
E    Below 60

Please note that a C- is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, General Education, Gordon Rule, or College Basic distribution credit. To achieve such credit you must
achieve a C or better in this class.  http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html

**Policies, Rules, and Resources**

1. **Handing in Assignments**: Place all papers in my mailbox in the Religion Department, 107 Anderson Hall. DO NOT slip them under the door or leave them on the door of my office, the main department office, or the teaching assistant’s office. Please also keep a dated electronic copy of all your papers.

2. **Late or Make-Up Assignments**: You may take an exam early or receive an extension on an exam or essay assignment only in extraordinary circumstances and, barring emergency situations, prior approval from the instructor. If an extension is not granted, the assignment will be marked down 1/3 grade (e.g., from B+ to B) for each day late.

3. **Completion of All Assignments**: You must complete all written and oral assignments and fulfill the requirement for class participation in order to pass the course. I will not average a grade that is missing for any assignment. You are responsible for knowing the course requirements and making sure you hand them in. I will not remind you of missing assignments.

4. **Attendance and Participation**: Class attendance is required, except for excused absences, e.g. religious holidays, participation in curricular activities, and university-sponsored sporting events. Do not register for this class if you cannot arrive on time. Students should arrive on time and prepared to discuss the day’s readings. Tardiness harms your understanding of the material and disrupts the class. After the first late arrival, the instructor reserves the right to mark you absent, without an excused absence. The instructor will *not* provide notes or discuss material that has already been covered for students who arrive late, barring extraordinary circumstances (which do not include failing to find a parking place or sleeping in).

5. **Common Courtesy**: Cell phones and other electronic devices must be turned off during class. Students who receive or make calls or text messages during class will be asked to leave and counted absent for the day. Students may take notes on a laptop computer only with prior approval from the instructor. The instructor reserves the right to ask you to turn off the computer if circumstances warrant. The instructor also reserves the right to ask any student engaging in disruptive behavior (e.g., whispering, reading a newspaper) to leave the class. If that occurs, the student will be marked absent for the day.

6. **Honor Code**: On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The university specifically prohibits cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation, bribery, conspiracy, and fabrication. For more information about the definition of these terms and other aspects of the Honesty Guidelines, see http://www.chem.ufl.edu/~itl/honor.html. Any student(s) demonstrated to have cheated, plagiarized, or otherwise violated the Honor Code in *any assignment* for
this course will fail the course. In addition, violations of the Academic Honesty Guidelines shall result in judicial action and the sanctions listed in paragraph XI of the Student Conduct Code.

7. **Accommodation for Disabilities**: Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/)

8. **Counseling Resources**: Resources available on-campus for students include the following:
   a. University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling;
   b. Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling;
   c. Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling;
   d. Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

9. **Software Use**: All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

10. **Writing Assistance**: In addition to scheduling time with the instructor, students are highly encouraged to seek assistance from the University Reading and Writing Center ([http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/index.html](http://www.at.ufl.edu/rwcenter/index.html)). For additional assistance, I recommend Joshua Sowin’s “A Guide to Writing Well” ([http://www.fireandknowledge.org/archives/2007/01/08/a-guide-to-writing-well/](http://www.fireandknowledge.org/archives/2007/01/08/a-guide-to-writing-well/)). The University of Wisconsin-Madison Writing Center is also a valuable resource, especially for basic citation information: ([http://www.writing.wisc.edu/](http://www.writing.wisc.edu/)).

**REQUIRED READINGS**

PLEASE NOTE: All readings will be available on reserve at Library West and/or on line.

**Required reading: Books**

**Required reading: Articles and Chapters**

Barthes, Roland. “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption.”


**Topic/Assignment**

**I. Introducing Religious Studies**
This section will begin to define Religious Studies as a humanistic discipline, its unique theoretical and methodological perspectives, and its role in interdisciplinary studies. Lectures will introduce a number of key thinkers, perspectives, and terms which will be referred to throughout the semester.

January 8 Introduction to the course

January 10 “Religion and Food” and “Foodways” *(Ency. of Food and Culture)*; [http://www.enotes.com/food-encyclopedia]

**II. Introducing Religion and Food**
This section defines the sub-field of Religion and Food. Lectures and readings introduce key thinkers, perspectives, and terms which will be used throughout the semester. This section uses *Miriam’s Kitchen: A Memoir* to explore Jewish dietary practices in the context of twentieth century American religious history.

January 15 Mary Douglas, “Deciphering a Meal” [E-learning]

January 17 Roland Barthes, “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption” [E-learning]

January 22 Ehrlich, *Miriam’s Kitchen: A Memoir*

January 24 Ehrlich, *Miriam’s Kitchen: A Memoir*
III. Food and Ritual
This section introduces the relationship between food and ritual practice, drawing on examples from Hinduism in India and the USA, Protestant denomination in the US Midwestern region, and indigenous traditions of the Americas. Students will learn about specific ritual practices and also how these rituals have changed in response to social and historical factors, e.g. immigration.

**Draft of Response Paper #1 Due**

January 31  Wall, Dennis and Virgil Masayesva, "People of the Corn: Teachings in Hopi Traditional Agriculture, Spirituality, and Sustainability," [E-learning]

February 5  Sack, “Liturgical food”, Ch 1
**Final Version of Response Paper #1 Due**

IV. Feasting and Fasting
This section introduces feasting and fasting in religious context and explores how individuals shape their religious, gender, and moral identities through these practices. This section draws upon examples from medieval Christianity, Hinduism in India and the USA, and twentieth century Scandinavia.


February 12  Film: Babette’s Feast

February 14  Wright, Wendy. “Babette's Feast: A Religious Film” [E-learning]

V. Food and Faith in the American South
This section traces the development of food cultures from Africa through the West Indies to the Low Country and addresses the relationship between food, religion, and social structures in the American South.

February 19  McWilliams, “Adaptability: The Bittersweet Culinary History of the West Indies” [E-library]
February 21  Julianne Dodson, “There’s Nothing Like Church Food” [E-library]

February 26  Midterm Exam

Vl. Food and Our Moral Selves
This section explores how individuals use food and eating to shape their moral selves, including choices about the foods one eats as well as practices of food-related charity.

February 28  Puskar-Pasewicz, Margaret. “Kitchen Sisters and Disagreeable Boys: Debates over Meatless Diets in Nineteenth Century Shaker Communities.” [E-learning]

March 5  Spring Break

March 7  Spring Break

March 12  Sack, “Global Food” and “Moral Food”

March 14  Foer, Eating Animals

March 19  Foer, Eating Animals
Draft of Response Paper #2 Due

Vll. Food, Religion, and Sustainability
This section explores the relationship between religion, food, and sustainable food systems, providing examples of religious response to agrarian crises. Examples include Zen Buddhism and US Catholicism.

March 21  Wirzba, “The ‘Roots’ of Eating” [E-learning]

March 26  Dirt! The Movie
Selections from Fukuoka, The One-Straw Revolution
Final Version of Response Paper #2 Due

Vlll. Religion, Food, and Social Change
This section explores the intersection of food, religion, and society, highlighting the role of food in the struggle for justice, equity, and opportunity. This sections compares alternative ideals about the
United States using examples from Protestant Christianity, the Ojibwe, and the O’odham peoples.

March 28  Jessica Harris, “We Shall Not Be Moved”  
[E-learning]

Nabhan, “The Desert Walk for Heritage and Health”  
[E-learning]

[E-learning]

April 9  Selections from Renewal

April 11  Group Conferences

IX. Final Conferences
April 16  Poster Presentations

April 18  Poster Presentations  
Take-home Exam handed out

April 23  Conclusions  
Take-home Exam Due
Grading Rubric for Essays:

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<tr>
<th>Qualities &amp; Criteria</th>
<th>Unsatisfactory (C- or below)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (B-C range)</th>
<th>Satisfactory (A-B+ range)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Format/Layout</td>
<td>Follows poorly the requirements related to format and layout.</td>
<td>Follows, for the most part, all the requirements related to format and layout. Some requirements are not followed.</td>
<td>Closely follows all the requirements related to format and layout.</td>
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<td>Content/Information</td>
<td>The essay is not objective and addresses poorly the issues referred in the proposed topic. The provided information is not necessary or not sufficient to discuss these issues.</td>
<td>The essay is objective and for the most part addresses with an in depth analysis most of the issues referred in the proposed topic. The provided information is, for the most part, necessary and sufficient to discuss these issues.</td>
<td>The essay is objective and addresses with an in depth analysis all the issues referred in the proposed topic. Critical thinking and synthesis of sources is fully evident</td>
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<td>Quality of Writing</td>
<td>The essay is not well written, and contains many spelling errors, and/or grammar errors and/or use of English errors. The essay is badly organized, lacks clarity and/or does not present ideas in a coherent way.</td>
<td>The essay is well written for the most part, without spelling, grammar or use of English errors. The essay is for the most part well organized, clear and presents ideas in a coherent way.</td>
<td>The essay is well written from start to finish, without spelling, grammar or use of English errors. The essay is well organized, clear and presents ideas in a coherent way.</td>
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<td>References and use of references</td>
<td>Most of the references used are not important, and/or are not of good/scholarly quality. There is not a minimum of 4 scholarly resources, and/or they are not used effectively in the essay. References are not effectively used, and/or correctly cited and/or correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.</td>
<td>Most of the references used are important, and are of good/scholarly quality. There is a minimum of 4 scholarly resources that are for the most part used effectively in the essay. Most of the references are effectively used, correctly cited and correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.</td>
<td>All the references used are important, and are of good/scholarly quality. There is a minimum of 4 scholarly resources that are used effectively in the essay. All the references are effectively used, correctly cited and correctly listed in the reference list according to APA style.</td>
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Overriding criterion: 0riginality and authenticity. If the essay is identified as not being original, and/or not done by the student, the instructor has the right to grade the paper as an F.

*Rubric originally developed by Dr. Stella Porto of UMUC