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Welcome to the Anthropology of Food

Available on-line in your

Moodle

folder at

<moodle.umn.edu>

**This will be a great course, and a great experience.
You will see. . . .**

**I hope you had a great holiday feast on Christmas, if you
celebrate Christmas. It wouldn't have been the same without
its festival foods. In this course we'll see why that is.**

Of course, from the point of view of the [locavores](#), it wouldn't be Christmas *in Minnesota* without talk of *lutefisk* [literally "lye fish"]. *Lutefisk* in Minnesota make news: [Minneapolis lutefisk plant adapts to new cultures, new demands](#) (Sharyn Jackson, *Star Tribune*, 25 December 2014). Jackson reports, "Superstar chef **Marcus Samuelsson**," who you will "meet" several times in the Anthropology of Food class, "who grew up in Sweden, once did a twist on *lutefisk* at the former Aquavit in Minneapolis using salt cod, which got positive feedback. But a revival of the real *lutefisk*, he said, seems far off."

"I think that *lutefisk* was more famous than good," Samuelsson said. "My grandparents loved it and the rest of us were not so sure."

You will like Marcus Samuelsson.

In case you were wondering what else Norwegians eat for Christmastide, the folks at the U.S. Embassy in Oslo, Norway, sent their Christmas Greetings . . .

 [Americans Try Norwegian Christmas Food](#)
-- [U.S. Embassy, Oslo](#)

And, in case you're wondering, *lutefisk* is alive and well (so to speak) in Minnesota . . .

[What's a holiday without lutefisk and a little white lye?](#)

-- [MPRNews](#) (15 December 2016)

[Holiday tradition: O Lutefisk, O Lutefisk](#)

-- The traditional lutefisk song at the annual lutefisk dinner at First Lutheran Church in Duluth on Dec. 7, 2016, [DuluthNewsTribune](#)

[Minnesota millennial tries to save the traditional church lutefisk dinner](#)

-- [StarTribune](#) (12 November 2016)

[Finding Minnesota: The Taste Of Lutefisk](#)

-- [CBS Minnesota](#) (20 December 2015)

[The season of lutefisk](#)

-- [MPR News](#) (10 December 2015)

Some people like to procrastinate. Others like to arrive at a dinner party early, and in other ways they're "pre-crastinators".

I am sending this note out early to make it more convenient for the pre-crastinators to order textbooks on-line (if that is an attractive option for you), and/or to let you get started reading one or other of the interesting books we have for the class (if you are the kind of person who likes to do that sort of thing). Or you might want to start watching one or other of the many internationally-award-winning films and videos that we have lined up for the class.

If none of these options apply to you, and you feel like a little mid-break procrastination, just relax and enjoy the wonderful winter weather, and, the rest of your break, but be sure to have some lentils on New Years' Day—[an old European tradition said to bring Good Fortune in the New Year](#)). . .

Interest in food and culture has never been higher.

Whether or not you agree with the various commentators, and there are many these days, representing all sides of the food industry and all food interest groups, food is IN the news. **And some weeks food IS the news.** And that's true year 'round, not just for *lutefisk* and the Yuletide holidays . . .

One of the best sources for up-to-date news is [BBC News Europe](#). I also like [The Telegraph](#) and, to balance things out, [The Guardian](#) (UK Edition), [The New York Times](#), and the [StarTribune](#). Check in with these sources from time to time to find news items like . . .

- [The case against sugar: A potent toxin that alters hormones and metabolism, sugar sets the stage for epidemic levels of obesity and diabetes](#) -- Gary Taubes ([Aeon](#), 22 December 2016)
- [How much is too much? New study casts doubts on sugar guidelines](#) -- [MPRNews](#) (19 December 2016)
- [Study Tied to Food Industry Tries to Discredit Sugar Guidelines](#) -- [The New York Times](#) (19 December 2016)
- [Don't call it soy milk, Vermont congressman says](#) -- [USA TODAY](#) (16 December 2016)
- [Wealthy Londoner angers farmers by campaigning against slurry that 'ruins his weekends' at second home in Devon](#) -- [The Telegraph](#) (16 December 2016)
- [Why vitamin pills don't work, and may be bad for you](#) -- [BBCfuture](#) (08 December 2016)
- [Minnesota farmers ready for new curbs on livestock antibiotics](#) -- [MPR](#) (16 December 2016)
- [The meaning of 'democracy sausage', Australia's word of 2016](#) -- [BBCtravel](#) (14 December 2016)
- [Amazon unveils plans for grocery shop with no checkouts](#) -- [BBCNews](#) (05 December 2016)

Speaking of food news and new foods, New Foods at the 2016 Minnesota State Fair featured Two New SPAM burger flavors (the [New Foods at the 2015 Minnesota State Fair](#) featured **FIVE** New SPAM burger flavors). Not so long ago my wife, Kim, and I stopped off in Hawaii on the way back from Australia and New Zealand where we were visiting relatives. I learned in the “trivia” section of the New Zealand Air in-flight magazine that Hawaiians eat more **Spam** per capita than the citizens of any other country on earth. Hawaiians love our Minnesota **Spam!** It is even reported that some eat it as a delicacy.



Hawaiian Spamburger

Minnesota’s own Spam . . . turned 79 on July 5th . . .



Minnesota’s Hormel meat packer opened a new 14,000 square foot Spam museum in Austin on 22 April 2016: [Canning its old location, Austin's new Spam Museum opens . . .](#)

To start off Spam’s 75th birthday year the Minneapolis *StarTribune* celebrated “America’s love of Spam” in a full-page feature on one of Minnesota’s best-known products (next to Scotch tape). See for yourself (<http://www.startribune.com/lifestyle/travel/137199258.html>) > StarTribune, Sunday, January 15, 2012, G5).

My sister-in law nearly “pukes” when she sees Spam in my refrigerator (her term, not mine), so she’s left out of the “love affair” article, except, perhaps in the second half of the “love it or hate it” part.

You have spam in your e-mail box, if not in your icebox. And if it's not in your icebox or cupboard, why not? (Amazon.com is currently offering six-pack subscriptions of Spam Classic for \$20.99—a whopping \$6.24 less than it was a year ago in January.)

There's probably a good reason why it is or isn't in your icebox or cupboard.

Or maybe several.

I once owned an official plastic **Spamburger cutter**, which after it was forbidden in the kitchen I used for a while as a Christmas tree ornament. It mysteriously disappeared one year, about the Feast of the Three Kings, and Spamburgers haven't been the same since. And this year, again, our Christmas tree was Spamburger-cutter-less. (Used Spamburger cutters on e-Bay, *WHEN* you can get one, have been going for \$22.99- \$24.99 on e-Bay, listed as "A Vintage Mod Retro Spam Spamburger Hamburger Plastic Vertical Push Down Slicer".)



The Chinese, meanwhile, have come up with a cute little plastic Spam cutter that cuts designs of a car, ship and train from a single slab of Spam. And you can best cut your Spam with the Musubi Easy Stainless Steel Spam Slicer, which in one swift motion will divide your single lump of Spam into nine neatly portioned slab-ettes ready for the Musubi's final touch.

We don't eat Spam in our house unless my sister-in-law's sister is away.

Spam.com <<http://www.spam.com/>> may represent "Americana" at its finest—including a recipe exchange, should you like to try some. And you can visit Spam on *facebook* <<http://www.facebook.com/spambrand/>>. Try the Hawaiian-Themed Spam Recipes for a little variety. And for the real treat there's always the annual April Waikiki Spam Jam in Hawaii.

**The point here is that Spam makes you happy
or makes you vomit, depending on a lot of
cultural experiences to which you have been
exposed. And it's not just about Spam as a**

food product; it's about Spam as a cultural phenomenon.

And if you don't have it in your cabinet or refrigerator, you certainly have it on your computer.

In a much broader way, we'll be exploring those cultural aspects of food—nutritional, spiritual, social, political, psychological, historical, recreational, economic, and the like—so stay tuned.

I am looking forward to "meeting" you in class on the 12th. At your convenience, have a look at the information in your **Moodle** folder at [<https://moodle.umn.edu/>](https://moodle.umn.edu/).

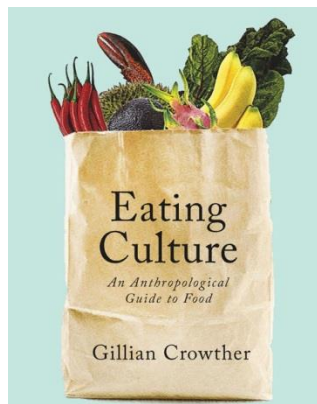
Detailed information on the textbooks for the course—there are three—can be found at

<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/aftexts.html>•

The course anchor text is . . .

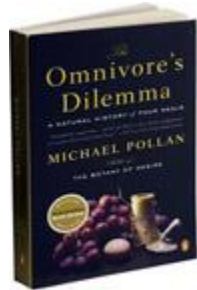
Eating Culture: An Anthropological Guide to Food,

by Gillian Crowther, Professor of Anthropology at Capilano University in Vancouver, BC (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013).



Eating Culture: An Anthropological Guide to Food,

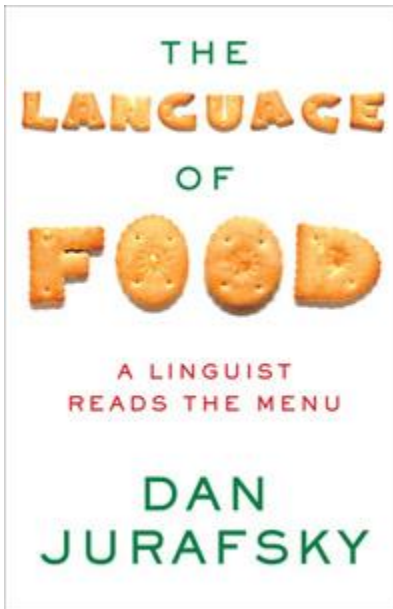
is currently available on-line new for \$39.95 (pbk.), \$27.18 used, and \$15.37 Kindle.
[It has been offered on-line for as much as \$84.97, or even more, so be careful to check prices.]
(+ p/h, where applicable, at amazon.com & eligible for FREE Prime Shipping on orders over \$25).
(23 December 2016)



***The Omnivore's Dilemma:
A Natural History of Four Meals (2007)***

an international run-away best seller,
is currently available on-line for \$12.75 new (pbk.), \$13.99 Kindle, and \$0.01 used.
(+ p/h, where applicable, at amazon.com & eligible for FREE Super Saver Shipping on orders over \$25).
(23 December 2016)

Note: *The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat, Young Readers Edition* (2009), also by Michael Pollan, is a different edition of the book.



2015 James Beard Award Nominee: Writing and Literature category

The Language of Food: A Linguist Reads The Menu

is currently available on-line new for \$11.89 (ppbk.), \$6.36 used, and \$9.99 Kindle.
(+ p/h, where applicable, at amazon.com & eligible for FREE Prime Shipping on orders over \$25).
(23 December 2016)

Textbooks are available from the following vendors . . .

[UMD Bookstore](#) | [Amazon.com](#) | [Barnes and Noble](#)
[CampusBooks.com](#) | [Chegg](#) [rental] | [ecampus.com](#) | [half.com](#)
[booksprice.com](#) | [CheapestTextbooks.com](#) | [CourseSmart.com](#) | [TextbookMedia.com](#)
| [Direct Textbook](#) |

The exams will be open-book essays constructed from a list of study questions that you help create, so it would be a good idea for you to have your own copy of each text you plan to use in the exams.

For the exams you should normally just need to read the books carefully and be able to discuss them intelligently. That is, you should read these as if you had picked it/them up at an airport or neighborhood bookshop because you were interested in the subject and wanted to know more about it, like literally millions of people are doing in everyday life.

PLEASE NOTE: *Some students are used to principally memorizing facts in classes. This class is not one where that is the focus. It is about investigating new topics, reading, listening, synthesizing ideas, thinking, exploring, and becoming familiar enough with the various subjects, peoples and places to carry on an intelligent conversation in modern-day society.*

In short, this class aims to give you practice in critical thinking, and even creativity.

Critical thinking, involving **evaluation** and **synthesis**, has long been regarded as essential for success in the modern-day world. In recent years, actually for two decades, **creativity** has also become central to success, and "process skills" vital to creativity. Process skills involve "strategies to reframe challenges and extrapolate and transform information, and to accept and deal with ambiguity" (Pappano, "[Learning to Think Outside the Box](#)," [The New York Times EducationLife](#), 9 February 2014, 8). Laura Pappano, writer in residence at Wellesley Center for Women at Wellesley College, points out that "In 2010 'creativity' was the factor most crucial for success found in an I.B.M. survey of 1,500 chief executives in

33 industries. These days 'creative' is the most used buzzword in LinkedIn profiles two years running" (2014, 8).

Related to that, here are two recent interesting articles, the first from Minnesota Public Radio . . .

How to choose college classes: 6 tips

--Tracy Mumford, [Minnesota Public Radio News](#) (10 September 2015)

A Memo to My Students Re: College and the Real World

-- Maryellen Weimer, [Faculty Focus](#) (17 August 2016)

With all of the class materials **you will be expected to share your ideas and comments with others** in the **Class *Forums* and wikis**.

It is not accidental that *TAPS*, Canada's leading Beer Magazine—in fact it's *THE BEER MAGAZINE*—features this item from this class in its [editorial of Winter 2012, p. 2](#)); at least one major Editor in Chief thinks it's worth noting and imitating.

In a nutshell, this course consists of three main segments:

I Orientation and Background

- **Introduction**
- **Basic Concepts**
- **History**
- **Theory**
- **Methods and Techniques**

II Explorations

- **Comparative / Cross-Cultural**
- **Holistic**
- **Ethnographic Case Studies from the Real World: Real People . . . Real Places from Around the Globe**

III Student Presentations on Term Research Projects

For the first part of the course much of the material for the week will be presented in the form of text materials and slide materials. **In the second section** of the semester, once you have mastered the basic information relating to the Anthropology of Food, we will look (generally comparatively, *cf.*, Main Characteristics of Anthropology in Week 01) at a series of video materials from around the world. **The final section** will focus on your research projects.

One of the **four main characteristics of American**

Anthropology is fieldwork, "a primary research technique, involving "participant observation," which usually means living among the people one is interested in learning from and about. It would be wonderful if for anthropology classes we could just rent a bus or charter a plane and fly off for a year or more to learn first-hand from the people themselves. Money, time, and practicality prohibit that, so the next best things—when it comes to studying anthropology—is going to places and viewing subjects by video, and we will do a lot of that this semester. More information on **Visual Anthropology** is available on-line at

http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anth1604/visual_anthropology.html.

You will find that there is "an awful lot" of materials on-line—maybe even too many!

BUT don't worry. You will find **the *required* materials center stage in your Moodle folder. Most of the rest of the materials are optional**, but you may find that material useful in working on your class project.

Where to start?

Probably the best place is by having a quick look at the **"First Day Handout"** on-line at http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afhandout_first-day.html. It's the syllabus. It's the syllabus ([s2017.pdf version](#)).

Then have a look at your Moodle Gradebook folder, which gives a nice listing of the actual requirements and due dates for the course. (You'll find the link for that in the upper-left-hand corner of the top of Block 1. **See the figure in the “First Day Handout.”**)

Then have a look at the **"Course Overview" in Block 1** (the top of page one) of your **Moodle** folder [<https://moodle.umn.edu/>](https://moodle.umn.edu/). See the figure in the “First Day Handout.”

Please heed the earlier word of caution. Moodle recommends that you **use the Firefox browser** (available free at [<https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/update-firefox-latest-version>](https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/update-firefox-latest-version)). The Windows Internet Explorer (IE) occasionally will not display items on your screen. **These items will simply not be there on IE** when they are fine on **Moodle** or even on Chrome. Microsoft Word should likewise not be used to cut and paste things to **Moodle**; bad things can happen to your file if you do—randomly. Almost every time you are asked to enter text in **Moodle**, you will see the message, “Please do not copy/paste text directly from Microsoft Word. See explanation [here](http://www1.umn.edu/moodle/issues.html#10): [<http://www1.umn.edu/moodle/issues.html#10>](http://www1.umn.edu/moodle/issues.html#10).” Please pay attention to that request.

So once again, welcome to Anth 3888 Anthropology of Food. This *will be* a great course, and a great experience. You will see. . . .

Thanks for signing on for Anthropology of Food. I’m looking forward to seeing you on Thursday, the 12th, in Cina Hall 214.

Best of the Holiday Wishes to you . . .

I hope you had a great Boxing Day, and are having a good Christmas-Hanukkah-Kwanza season. Have a great New Year’s Evening and New Year’s Day and a great New Year.

In Vienna and Budapest and throughout much of Europe people will be eating lintels on New Year’s Day. Eating lintels helps you have a great new year. I’ve tried them in both places, and it seems the Hungarian lentils work just slightly better than elsewhere. A Hungarian professor friend recently passed on some important

information about New Year's Day lentils: "Gabriella says that the heart (seeds) are important for the coming fortune. . . ." **So on New Year's Day, eat plenty of lentils and pay special attention to the hearts. . . .**

My **office hours** and contact information (and other regular schedule information) can be found at

<<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anth1602/pcoffice.html>>.

Finally, **laptops** are welcome, in fact encouraged, in the classroom. Many find a laptop quite useful in following the lectures as all lectures are web supported. You can, for example, download all of the slide materials used in class.



Your Moodle site is now on-line.
Have a look at it at <moodle.umn.edu>.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to post them on **Moodle** or e-mail troufs@d.umn.edu.

See you on the 12th.

Best Wishes,

Tim Roufs
Duluth, MN
26 December 2016

P.S. If you are new to the world of "technology" don't worry too much about that. Things may not "work" for you at first, but hang in there and we'll help you along. If you have not used **Moodle** course management system before, you might find it helpful to view **the orientation tutorial**.