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Anthropology of Food Week 3



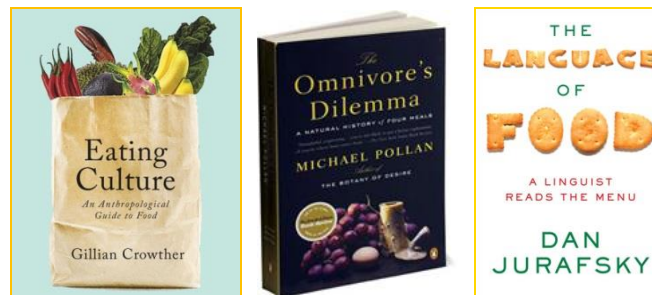
"Settled Ingredients: Domestic Food Production"

Diet and Human Evolution: Archaeology / Prehistory

Hunter-Gathering or Foraging, and the Emergence of Food Production

Video Explorations:

Marcus Samuelsson's *The Meaning of Food: "Food & Life"*
Did Cooking Make Us Human?



Looking forward to class this week, . . . we begin our Video Explorations with Marcus Samuelsson, who will start us off—for the most part—on a happy positive cheerful optimistic joyful note. In his usually upbeat way Marcus Samuelsson will start off the **Video Explorations** with

The Meaning of Food: "Food & Life" as he examines the general symbolic importance of food and eating.

Marcus' presentation this week contains a segment on "Preparing Last Meals." It's part of **"Food & Life" coverage. Check the *Forum* posts from last week to see what others in the class would have as their last meal**, if they had the opportunity to choose their last meal. It's an interesting selection of choices. **And don't overlook last week's trivia question: "What would Willie Nelson's Last Supper be?"**

This week Marcus Samuelsson talks about "Food & Life" in *The Meaning of Food* (pp.1-33, optional)—asking the questions, "What is Food?" "What is a Meal?" and then looking at "Homey Food," "Sacramental Food," and "Erotic Food." That later topic on erotic food brings us all the way back to the "Food Pornography" Sherri Inness accuses *The Two Fat Ladies* of indulging in.

Food binds family to the point of death among the Balti, as among many peoples of the world. And, on feast days like the Mexican feast of *Dia de los Muertos* (2 November), food binds together the living and the dead members of a family. Paul Buffalo's people, the *Anishinabe* (Chippewa / Ojibwa of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Ontario), regularly offered food offerings to the dead, just like the Mexican people for *Dia de los Muertos*, but all year long.

If you were / are a member of a culture that practices food rituals such as those of *Dia de los Muertos*, it would be pretty difficult to answer last week's "Last Meal" *Forum* question, as there *wouldn't ever be* a last meal so long as any of your descendants remained alive and committed to cultural traditions like respecting *el Dia* and its requisite food offerings to the dead.

When Mark Bittman, one of the great food writers of our times, when he bid farewell from *The New York Times* food column that he had been writing for five years (to join a California start-up food company), commented on what major advances—and areas of no progress—have and haven't been made in the area of Food while he was food editor of *The New York Times*

(2011-2015). **His farewell column was an excellent summary of what has happened in recent years . . .**

“A Farewell, Mark Bittman“

(The New York Times, Sunday, 13 September 2015)



Bittman noted, as he moved on . . .

“When I began, nearly five years ago, food was not generally considered as serious a topic as it is now. . . .

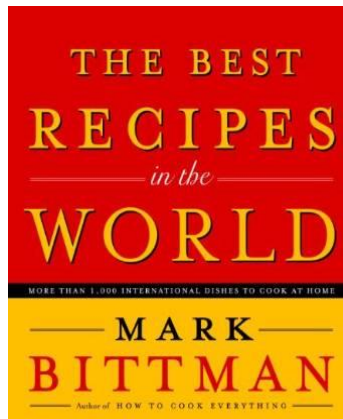
Mostly I believe that I’ve identified the major issues facing us in the interwoven worlds of food, agriculture, nutrition and the environment. . . . **Now, nearly everyone knows that food matters. If you see food only as food, if you think of food only as pleasure, your head is in the sand. Food affects just about everything, and vice versa. The increasing awareness of this has led to big changes at the intersection of food and news and opinion.** When I began, there were a few people writing seriously about food online and in print; I knew most if not all of them. Our positions were often similar, but to speak in *The Times* gave the ideas broader exposure. And indeed, what I’ve written has been, generally speaking, valued beyond my dreams. . . .”

“The world of food writing has changed. Dozens if not scores of writers are expressing opinions about food, often daily. That, combined with the competition to be distinctive, leads to tremendous pressures that sometimes result in hasty, often exaggerated positions along with ridiculous stances,

like expressing disdain for salads or arguing that increasing the minimum wage for food workers is harmful.”

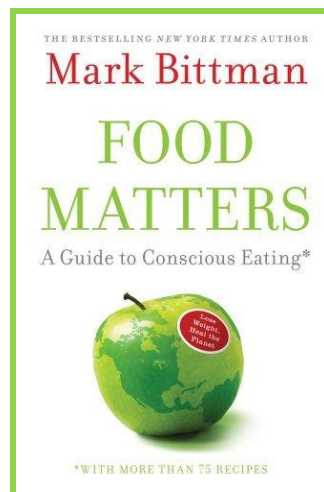
Bittman concludes with his views of what “real progress” has been made, and what food problems remain intransigent and a disappointment to him.

Bittman, of course, was into the world-wide Anthropology of Food, including his highly proclaimed applied work . . .



(P.S. If you get married and invite Kim and I to your wedding, this is what you will get for a wedding present.)

Food Matters, more now than ever . . .



[What to Eat?](#)

The first porcupine I ever ate was with some of the last of the very traditional hunters and gatherers of the

Leech Lake Reservation. Paul Buffalo (born first in 1898/9 and again on White Oak Point on the 4th of July in 1900) and I—in the mid-1960s—shared a porcupine, boiled whole, with his brother “Joe Sky” Nason in a small log cabin in the woods west of Deer River. “Joe Sky” killed it with a wooden club explaining that he just had a hankerin’ for some old time food—very much **like we will see this week in the BBC video *Did Cooking Make us Human?*** Paul Buffalo’s family lived following the traditional seasonal food cycle until WWI, about 1915.

I had the right-front leg and shoulder of the porcupine, which, when I first saw it, was sticking up out of the pan about four inches, hairy paw attached. The cooked porcupine had a *really* strong flavor, for my tastes, but the old-time lumberjacks who chewed snuff, chewing tobacco, and plug tobacco most of their lives *loved* porcupine—because it was a food that they could still taste after having ruined their taste buds with a life of chewing snus and plug tobacco (sometimes at the same time). In traditional times *Anishinabe* peoples in northern Minnesota did not generally “hunt” (actually more like *collect*) porcupine. No, they generally left porcupines alone *because* porcupine were very easy to catch—one could do it with just a stick—and porcupine was thus a sort of “survival” food in case they didn’t get other meats (which wasn’t very often). In the classical anthropology film *The Hunters* the small Khoisan* hunting party of four, of a group which had been without meat in their camp for a month, eventually “collected” two porcupine after coming home empty-handed two or three times.

*[aka the Kalahari Bushmen, !Kung, San, and other names]

During Week 3 of Anthropology of Food we're traveling back into prehistoric times. You will see some of these materials also in Chapter Two of *Eating Culture*, “Settled Ingredients: Domestic Food Production,” and in Chapter Four, “Cooks and Kitchens.”

If you find some of the **names of the prehistoric apes and early humans** (and their home locations) confusing, don't let that bother you. **Not so long ago a whole major species was added to the list: Homo naledi.** The class materials this week will walk you through these foreign-sounding topics, *sans* *Homo naledi*, and provide a little more illustration to the points that the text makes.

The video *Did Cooking Make Us Human?* will also review some of the main prehistoric players in the ancient food scene.

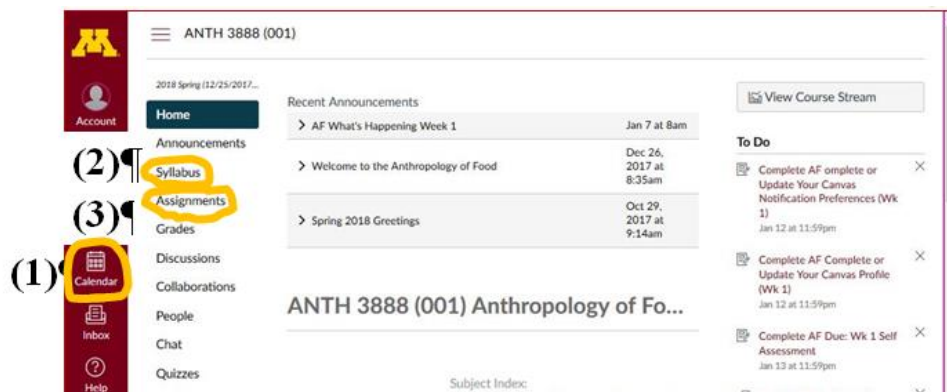
And **remember, the exams are open-book tests**—so bear in mind that you *do not* have to memorize these names and facts. So familiarize yourself with the materials, but don't spend too much time trying to commit the details to memory. (If you haven't read the materials about the Anth of Food exams yet, it might be a good idea to do that before too long. You can find that information at http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afexams_midterm.html.)

For this week—for the entire term, for that matter—**focus on the ideas and main concepts and differing points of view**. In the video *Did the Cooking Make us Human?*, for example, pay attention to what **Richard Wrangham's ideas** are, and how he argues in support of them.






Remember that **archaeology is one of the four main branches of American Anthropology** (from Weeks 1 and 2).

Assignments and Events





... **this week** are listed on your **(1) "Calendar"**, your **(2) "Syllabus"**, and in the **(3) "Assignments"** section of your  **canvas** folder.



(1) "Calendar"

21	22	23	24	25	26	27
 AF For Fun Food Trivia: The human brain encodes what three factors in processing nouns?	 1a AF Wk 3 Readings	 9a AF Day 4 Agenda: Video: "Food & Life"		 9a AF Day 5 Agenda: Video: Did Cooking Make Us Human?	 AF Discussion: Food and Climate Change (Wk 3)	 AF Discussion: What's for Supper? (Wk 3)

(2) "Syllabus"

Sun Jan 21, 2018	 AF For Fun Food Trivia: The human brain encodes what three factors in processing nouns?	
Mon Jan 22, 2018	 AF Wk 3 Readings	
Tue Jan 23, 2018	 AF Day 4 Agenda: Video: "Food & Life"	
Thu Jan 25, 2018	 AF Day 5 Agenda: Video: Did Cooking Make Us Human?	
Fri Jan 26, 2018	 AF Discussion: Food and Climate Change (Wk 3)	due by 11:59pm
	 AF Discussion: What's for Supper? (Wk 3)	due by 11:59pm

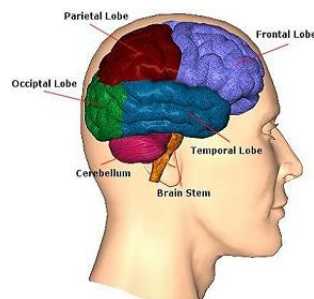
(3) "Assignments"

▸ Explore Canvas . . .	+ ⚙
▸ Getting Started	+ ⚙
▸ Weekly Happening . . . (Weekly Memos)	+ ⚙
▸ Reading Assignments	+ ⚙
▸ Discussions (Forums)	+ ⚙
▸ Project = Presentation + Term Paper	+ ⚙
▸ For Fun Trivia	+ ⚙
▸ Optional Extra Credit	+ ⚙
▸ Daily Agenda	+ ⚙
▸ Imported Assignments	+ ⚙


This week our **trivia question for fun** relates to the **human brain . . .**

(below the “Reading Assignments” section of Block 2) . . .

The human brain encodes what three factors in processing nouns?



[Answer](#)

If you have any **questions** right now, please do not hesitate to post them on the  **canvas** Course “Chat”, or e-mail troufs@d.umn.edu, or stop in before or after class across the hall in Cina 215 [\[map\]](#).

Best Regards,

Tim Roufs

<http://www.d.umn.edu/~troufs/>