Welcome to the Anthropology of Food

Available on-line in your folder at <http://canvas.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, and on New Year’s, if you celebrated the New Year at this time. It wouldn’t have been the same without its festival foods. In this course we’ll see why that is so.
Of course, it wouldn’t be Christmas in Minnesota without talk of lutefisk [literally “lye fish”].

Love it or loathe it, Minnesota's lutefisk tradition lives on

(— MPR News (11 December 2017)

About the Anth of Food course . . .

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).

If none of these options apply to you, and you feel like a little end-of-holiday procrastination, just relax and enjoy the wonderful winter weather, and, the rest of your break.
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 and not just during the holiday season . . .

Just recently there have been several interesting items in the news:

Just for the fun of it, have a look over these news items that have appeared just in the last few days, then pick one and have a look at it (no it will not be on the exam).

See what you think about it:

- **The town that changed the way we eat** – BBC Travel, 7 January 2019
- **Half of people who think they have a food allergy do not** – study – The Guardian, 4 January 2019
- **Protein mania: the rich world’s new diet obsession** – The Guardian, 4 January 2019
- **Japan sushi tycoon pays record tuna price** [$3,100,000] – BBC News, 5 January 2019
- **Genetically modified 'shortcut' boosts plant growth by 40%** – BBC News, 3 January 2019
- **Children 'exceed recommended sugar limit by age 10** – BBC News, 3 January 2019
- **How to Eat in 2019** – The New York Times, 31 December 2018
- **Prince Philip grows prized black truffles at Sandringham** – Daily Mail Online, 1 January 2019
- **The Norwegian art of the packed lunch** – BBC Capital, 3 January 2019
- **What Foods Are Banned in Europe but Not Banned in the U.S.?** --The New York Times, 28 December 2018
And the list goes on . . . featuring food news for everyone.

Some of the best sources for up-to-date news on food include What FoodAnthro is Reading Now. . . . and Marion [no-relation-to-the-company] Nestle’s Food Politics Blog, The New York Times Food Section, BBC Food, the StarTribune, National Geographic > Food, and MPRNews > Food regularly carry interesting and important articles on food around the world.

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, except Guam (with North Korea’s Kim Jong-un pointing his intercontinental ballistic missiles at Guam, perhaps having stockpiled mountains of Spam is part of the Guamanian civil defense preparedness). Hawaiians and Guamanians love our Minnesota Spam! It is even reported that some eat it as a delicacy.

Minnesota’s own Spam . . . turned 80 on July 5th 2017. . .
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) – StarTribune, Sunday, January 15, 2012, G5).

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 . . .

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 of people’s general reaction to Spam.

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? (One year ago in January Amazon.com was offering six-pack subscriptions of Spam Classic for $20.99——$1.48 less than it was two years before in January. Right now (8 January 2019) they’ve pulled the old switcheroo and are offering a EIGHT-PACK for $27.90. So be on guard when you’re picking up your next five or six or eight cans of the Miracle Meat.)

There’s probably a good reason why Spam 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 eBay, WHEN you can get one, have been going for $19.99- $24.99 on eBay, listed as "A Vintage Mod Retro Spam Spamburger Hamburger Plastic Vertical Push Down Slicer". New, improved, models are now on sale for $19.49 with free handling and shipping.)

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-etts 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.

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


The course anchor text is . . .


by Gillian Crowther, Professor of Anthropology at Capilano University in Vancouver, BC (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018).
is currently available on-line for $37.01 new, $19.32 used, and $19.22 Kindle.
(3 January 2019)

The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals (2007)
an international run-away best seller,
is currently available on-line for $15.45 new, $1.48 used, $12.99 Kindle, and $15.99 Audiobook.
(+ p/h, where applicable, at amazon.com & eligible for FREE Super Saver Shipping on orders over $25).
(3 January 2019)

Note: The Omnivore's Dilemma: The Secrets Behind What You Eat, Young Readers Edition (2009), also by Michael Pollen, is a different edition of the book.
The Language of Food: A Linguist Reads The Menu

is currently available on-line new for $13.64 (ppbk.), $3.79 used, $9.99 Kindle, and $13.71 Audiobook
(+ p/h, where applicable, at amazon.com & eligible for FREE Prime Shipping on orders over $25).
(3 January 2019)

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).

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—featured 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/troofs/anth1604/visual_anthropology.html>. 
With all of these materials you will be expected to share your ideas and comments with others in the Class Discussions and wikis. I'm looking forward to that.

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

Where to start?

Probably the best place to start is with the "First Day Handout" on-line at <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afhandout_first-day.pdf>.

Also have a look at the course “Home” page of your canvas folder <http://canvas.umn.edu/>. It will look something like this . . .
Check the links on “Home” page . . .

Play around with your Canvas folder materials. . . . From your “Home” page go to “Assignments” . . .
Then look at your Canvas folder materials by clicking the triangle of the “Explore Canvas . . .” drop-down menu.

When the "Explore Canvas . . ." menu drops down, checkout the "Canvas Student Guide".

Start with the "Canvas Student Guide" if you are new to Canvas . . .
Then "ExploreCanvas" . . .

Then checkout the other items that interest you most.
Then set/update your Canvas (1) "User Settings" and "Profile Picture".
Complete or update your (2) "Canvas Profile".
Then set your (3) "Canvas Notification Preferences".
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<tr>
<td>AF 1 Canvas Student Guide</td>
<td>Jan 16 at 1:02am</td>
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<tr>
<td>AF 1 Canvas Guide: User Settings and Profile Picture</td>
<td>Jan 16 at 1:02am</td>
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<tr>
<td>AF 1 Complete or Update Your Canvas Profile</td>
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<td>AF 1 Complete or Update Your Canvas Notification</td>
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<td>AF 1 Introduce Yourself to the Class</td>
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<td>AF 1 Explore Canvas ...</td>
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These are all found in your canvas folder at <http://canvas.umn.edu/>.

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 am looking forward to “meeting” you in. In the meantime, you might want to peruse the information in your canvas folder at <http://canvas.umn.edu/>. The canvas Student Guide / Overview / Tour can be very helpful.

**Student Guide** -- written guides with step-by-step instructions for Canvas tools

**Canvas Student Overview** (6:47 min)
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>.

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

“See” you soon.

Tim Roufs
Port Arthur, Tasmania, Australia
8 January 2019

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 course management system before, you might find it helpful to view the Canvas Student Guide.