

Writing Food Culture HONORS 326-01, Fall 2025 Course Syllabus



Instructor: Julie Jenner

Meeting Time: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, 12:00-12:50 pm

Meeting Place: Doti Hall 105

Instructor's e-mail: jenner@chapman.edu

Zoom Office Hours: email anytime to set up an appointment

Using the focused theme of food with its many facets from farm to table as well as its many cultural and societal dimensions, this writing-based course aims to develop the critical and creative thinking needed to read, write, and dialogue effectively across various contexts, media, and genres. Students engage in creative, analytical, researched, and reflective genres of writing throughout the semester. Food writing in its numerous forms and expressions presents students with the opportunity to respond to and interpret texts from diverse disciplinary, historical, and cultural settings, considering issues such as style, cultural bias, and rhetorical impact. 3 credits. *Offered Fall semester. Prerequisite: acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor and Honors Director.*



Learning Outcomes

Honors Program

Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program, students will have

- obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives.
- sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood).
- understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world.
- developed effective communication skills.

Written Inquiry (WI):

Student establishes active, genuine, and responsible authorial engagement; communicates a purpose—an argument or other intentional point/goal; invokes a specific audience, develops the argument/content with an internal logic-organization; integrates references, citations, and sources materially logically and dialogically, indicating how such forms of evidence relate to each other and the author's position; and composes the text with: a style or styles appropriate to the purpose and intended audience, consistent use of the diction appropriate to the author's topic and purpose, the ability to establish and vary authorial voice(s) and tone(s), a choice of form(s) and genre(s) appropriate to purpose and audience (forms may be digital and/or multimodal), and rhetorically effective use of document design.

Social Inquiry (SI): Students identify, frame, and analyze social and/or historical structures and institutions in the world today.

Course-Specific Learning Objectives

Students will:

- hone competence in observation, description, analysis, and narrative.
- develop and discern rhetorical and stylistic strategies that best suit particular arguments, situations, and audiences.
- carry out individualized field observation and research.
- generate story ideas through critical reading and personal experience.
- communicate effectively through writing and multimedia storytelling.
- develop an ability to critique others' writing constructively and work collaboratively
- articulate how food itself (and various food media texts) represent and co-produce arrangements of power and categories of identity (such as race, gender, sexuality, and class), including ethical implications.
- Critically evaluate connections and disjunctions between our food media history and its present manifestations.
- Identify, frame, and analyze social and/or historical structures and institutions related to worldwide food production, processing, and distribution.
- clearly articulate their perspectives regarding the tastes and flavors of foodstuffs, consumption habits, and global food system issues.



Course Components

Meeting Format:

We will meet in Doti Hall 105 on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 12 pm to 12:50 pm, unless directed otherwise. Exceptions might include field trips, fieldwork, or individual conferences. Check the updated course schedule on Canvas for special meeting places.

Course Topics by Sections:

Weeks 1-2: Writing Food & Food Writing

Topics explored: course structure, food vocabulary, sensory and descriptive techniques for food writing, food writing genres

Weeks 3-4: Food & Society

Topics explored: *food business/economics, food scarcity, food distribution, grocery, farming practices, food movements/philosophies*

Weeks 5-6: Food & History

Topics explored: ethnic food history in America, local SoCal food history, recipes as cultural artifacts

Weeks 7-8: Food & Art

Topics explored: Food representations in visual art and media, visual storytelling

Week 9: Food & Science

Topics explored: nutrition, food processing, preservation, testing, and safety

Weeks 10-11: Food & Culture

Topics explored: familial and ethnic food traditions, celebratory foods, connection and community through food

Weeks 12-13: Cooking up the Final Project

Topics explored: brainstorming, drafting, revising, peer reviewing, and refining the final project

Week 14: **Fall Break!** No class meetings this week.

Week 15: Final Project Presentations

Finals Week/Exam Date: Tuesday, Dec. 9, 10:45-1:14 pm

Final Project Products due!

NOTE: A detailed weekly course schedule with in-class activities, field trips, field research, reading/viewing/writing assignments is available on Canvas under the modules for each week. I don't recommend printing out the schedule, as assignment due dates are subject to change. Always consult Canvas Modules for the most recent version of the weekly course schedule.

Required Course Texts & Materials:

Please acquire access to the following text for the course. A digital version is fine.

- *Books That Cook: The Making of a Literary Meal*, edited by Jennifer Cognard-Black and Melissa A. Goldthwaite (ISBN 978-1-4798-3021-3)

Other required readings and viewings for the course will be provided on Canvas Modules. Special texts may need to be acquired for your final project.

You will need to bring a laptop or comparable device to each class to engage in Canvas discussions or for other in-class exercises. This course employs features of Canvas. It is your responsibility to learn to use all the web functions that are relevant to the course.

Course Culture

Let's Keep Portals of Distraction Closed: In today's world, it's easy to let laptops, tablets, and phones distract us from the people and environment around us. Research shows that when students use devices for unrelated tasks, it not only disrupts their own learning but also that of nearby peers. This course relies on your full attention and participation. Your ideas gain depth through dialogue with others and written inquiry. Since discussion is central to our work, listening with care and respect is essential. We've all felt the sting of being ignored by someone absorbed in their phone. Let's commit to being fully present and attentive to one another.

Preserving Learning (a.k.a. using tools effectively): For me, college is a place where students choose to commit to a path they care about and share this commitment with professors who know them personally and meet them where they are. Together, we undergo an experiential and artisanal process of learning that improves critical skills, discipline, and self-direction. I'm committed to this process and expect the same of you. I presume that you will want to preserve learning potential and not offload all thinking and writing exercises assigned to you to an AI tool. If you do choose to use an AI tool in the drafting of your projects (group or individual) for this course, this usage must be disclosed in detail on a Works Cited page along with any other citations relevant to the development of the project.

Graded Components and Assessment:

10% // **ACE** (Attendance, Collaboration, Engagement):

15% // **Food Journal**

45% // **Section Assignments**

30% // **Final Project**

5% Presentation of process and product

20% Final product

5% Course reflection

100% // Total

A-100-94; A- 93-90; B+ 89-87; B 86-84; B- 83-80; C+ 79-77; C 76-74; C- 73-70; D+ 69-67; D 66-64; D- 63-60; F 59-0

ACE (Attendance, Collaboration, Engagement): **Attendance** is taken at the beginning of each class period. The University recommends that, as a minimal policy, students who are absent 20 percent of the course should receive an F for the course. If your attendance reaches this low attendance threshold, I will reach out and request a conference to discuss your situation and course grade. For this course, you are allowed three unexcused absences. I allow for three unexcused absences because I understand how life has a way of sometimes interfering with our regular schedules, so use these absences wisely. For each unexcused absence over the three allowed, your participation grade will be lowered five grade points. Though I appreciate the heads-up immensely, simply telling me in advance that you will be absent from class does not excuse the absence; it merely explains it. For an absence to be considered excused, official documentation must be provided. Some examples of official documentation include a note from the campus health center or a doctor in case of sickness, a copy of the notice in case of jury duty or some other court hearing, or a note from an instructor regarding an absence due to performance or sport. Let me know immediately if you need clarification about the nature of the absence or its documentation.

Tardiness is disruptive to the class and is noted on the attendance roster. I understand having to be late due to unavoidable circumstances; however, if I notice your tardiness becoming excessive or habitual, I will lower your participation grade, with three tardy arrivals being equivalent to one unexcused absence. It is your responsibility to complete all assigned readings and work for any missed class sessions. All assignments, due dates, handouts, and readings will be posted on Canvas before the class.

Collaboration and Engagement: We are a community of writers and learners in this course. Your active presence is crucial to your success in this class. Because we engage in group work, your peers depend on you being present, prepared, and attentive. You respect the learning community by being informed and fulfilling your responsibilities to your classmates. This element of your grade will be evaluated based on your performance in a combination of activities, including workshops, discussions, and writing activities.

You will receive all participation points when you attend class regularly (not having more than three unexcused absences), are on time, are engaged learners, bring readings and necessary materials to class (this includes laptops and any required texts), avoid distractive use of technology (using phones in class for personal communication), contribute regularly and in an informed manner to the class discussions, successfully collaborate with others, participate in any class activities

such as assigned discussion posts and presentations, manifest professional behavior (also in email exchanges), and help others to do all of the above.

Food Journal: You are to keep a semester-long food journal, noting your thoughts, memories, feelings, and experiences with eating, cooking, and other food-related topics. Intended as a semester-long practice, your food journal is an information management device where you can collect relevant reflections, inspirations, ideas, quotes, questions, notes, and images that will inform your final project for the course. Journals are submitted at the midterm and the semester's end for assessment.

Section Assignments: Each section of the course will have assignments associated with its specific topics, activities, and field trips. Assignments will also explore different genres of food writing, such as flash non-fiction, poetry, film/lit review, and memoir.

Final Project: This multi-media project focuses on an aspect of food culture that is of deep interest to you and will be conducted in different phases during the last weeks of the semester: proposal/conference, draft, revision, final product presentation, and reflection. The product and reflection letter are your final exam for the course and will be due during finals week.

Late Work Policy: Late assignments will not be accepted without penalty (10-point deduction and within a week of the due date) without an excused absence and/or an approved extension negotiated before the due date. You are required to turn in assignments in their designated areas on Canvas. Don't wait until the last minute to submit work; give yourself extra time in case any problems arise. If by chance you are having any difficulties posting on Canvas that day, send me a copy of your assignment by email, using your student email to meet the deadline, and then try again later to post your assignment to Canvas.

Peer Collaboration: We are a community of writers and learners in this course. You will engage with peers for group discussions, workshops, and other collaborative activities. Giving and receiving feedback on works in progress is invaluable to growing as a writer and understanding writing as a social process. I will be providing general guidelines on how to respond to your peers' work during peer review sessions.

Field Work and Trips, and Archival Research: There might be days when the class or research will be conducted outside the usual classroom space and time. For instance, we might meet at The Orange Homegrown Education Farm or in various spaces around campus and Orange's Plaza Circle, such as the Orange Library History Center. Locations and times will be announced in advance and posted on the course schedule.

Guest Speakers and Special Events: As needed, I will make space in our course schedule for guest speakers and special campus events that inform the content of the course. Locations and times will be announced in advance and posted on the course schedule.

Individual Conferences: Individual conferences will take place the week before the fall break to discuss your final project for the course. You are required to sign up for a time slot this week. We will not hold class meetings during these conferencing days, but you are required to complete any readings or assignments as directed in the course schedule. Conferences are an opportunity to discuss any concerns or challenges you are having with the class or with writing in general, or to discuss ideas for projects and revisions. This is the only required conference meeting during the semester; however, I encourage you to schedule additional meeting times with me throughout the semester as needed.



Additional University Policy

Chapman University's Academic Integrity Policy. "Chapman University is a community of scholars that emphasizes the mutual responsibility of all members to seek knowledge honestly and in good faith. Students are responsible for doing their own work and academic dishonesty of any kind will be subject to sanction by the instructor/administrator and referral to the university Academic Integrity Committee, which may impose additional sanctions including expulsion. Please see the full description of Chapman University's policy on Academic Integrity at www.chapman.edu/academics/academicintegrity/index.aspx."

Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy. "In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to contact the Disability Services Office. If you will need to utilize your approved accommodations in this class, please follow the proper notification procedure for informing your professor(s). This notification process must occur more than a week before any accommodation can be utilized. Please contact Disability Services at (714) 516-4520 or visit www.chapman.edu/students/student-health-services/disability-services if you have questions regarding this procedure or for information or to make an appointment to

discuss and/or request potential accommodations based on documentation of your disability. Once formal approval of your need for an accommodation has been granted, you are encouraged to talk with your professor(s) about your accommodation options. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.”