Tasting Culture: Nordic and Mediterranean Food, Tradition, and Nutrition

JULY SUMMER SESSION 2021

INSTRUCTORS
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
We eat to live. But food isn’t just about survival, it’s about so much more: health, pleasure, identity, symbolism, class, memory, sensation, and on and on. We express who we are through our food. But how we eat is also shaped by other forces: doctors’ advice, economic ability, government regulations, climate, history, and many other factors often invisible to us in our everyday lives.

Over four weeks we will explore two distinct cultural contexts in Europe—Denmark and Greece—allowing us to understand both the commonalities and the differences that such forces bring to food and cuisine, as well as people’s imagination and inventiveness in creating something to eat.

The course begins in Athens, Greece, a country associated with the Mediterranean diet and a strong cultural history of knowledge and attention to food. We will supplement this exploration with a few days on the island of Naxos, to explore the locality of food traditions and production. The course continues in Copenhagen, Denmark, the emergent capital of New Nordic Cuisine, where tradition is being reinvented at levels both everyday and haute cuisine. To balance our understanding of urban foodways, we will also spend a couple of days on the rural island community of Samso, known for quality produce and sustainable living. These four locations will enable us to do comparative research and both explore and deconstruct the categories of new/old, urban/rural, north/south, global/local, tradition/modernity, and change/continuity. Along the way, the medicalization of diets, changes in agriculture, food tourism, food security, nationalism, locality, sustainability, and more will be addressed.

When not in the classroom, we will visit farms, vineyards, groves, restaurants, markets, museums, kitchens, sweets shops, cooperatives, NGOs, and festivals in our quest to experientially study food, and taste everything that comes our way. By taking this class, students will develop a sound understanding of how food is studied as an expression of society and culture, and hands-on training in the methodologies used to examine food and food practices.

LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS
● You will gain a firm understanding of the study of food in its social and cultural aspects, towards understanding the multilayered dimensions of food practices.
● You will become familiar with the bibliography related to food Denmark and Greece, and be able to place it within a general understanding of the social structures of contemporary Danish and Greek society and their historical development.
● You will learn to think about preparing, sharing, and eating food as activities that are central to building human relationships and creating meaning.
● You will become a critical reader of advertising, labeling, and popular news stories related to food and health.
● You will understand the central themes in contemporary debates surrounding food in regard to health, identity,
nation, gender, environment, and more in a European context.

- You will have broadened your palate with many amazing new tastes and textures.
- You will receive a basic introduction to ethnographic and organoleptic research methodologies and have put those research methods into practice in your own projects.

**STUDY TOURS**
You spend two weeks in Athens with CYA and two weeks in Copenhagen with DIS, thus you will travel on two short Study Tours. You will spend two of your weekends sailing out to the islands of Naxos in Greece and Samsø in Denmark to explore local food traditions.

**Study Tour Objectives**
- Strive to understand the terroir and how it works in tandem with other forces in shaping the local food culture
- Gain insight into the factors that affect the production and consumption of food
- Improve skills in tasting and assessing produce

**Naxos, Greece**
The picturesque island of Naxos is the largest of the Cyclades. Only a few hours from Athens, it has been a cultural center for millennia. While at Naxos, we sample local specialties, meet with producers of food, and gain insight into traditional craft around food production. Our visit will illustrate how history, identity, and terroir have been central in shaping contemporary practices around food production and consumption as well as some of the skills involved in traditional production.

**Samsø, Denmark**
Samsø is known for producing high-quality sustainable vegetables such as potatoes and carrots. These are staples in traditional Nordic cuisine. Additionally, Samsø has a unique island climate with rare indigenous plants that chefs have recently started to explore. While on Study Tour, we explore how the terroir of Samsø, as well as history of the island, inform local practices around food production and consumption. We will meet with manufacturers of produce, sample their goods and learn about how they are used.

**APPROACH TO TEACHING**
Classes are conducted as a combination of lectures, group discussions and interactive exercises. Active student participation is expected. Class sessions will be complemented by field studies and independent field work.

**EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**
Students are expected to show up for class prepared and participate actively.

Computers and tablets are allowed in class PURELY for note taking purposes. In case of other uses such as Facebook, emails or internet surfing, it will have a negative impact on your participation grade. Cell phones are to be shut off or silenced during class and texting etc. during class will have a negative impact on your participation grade.

**Evaluation**
Active class participation throughout the course: A=96 / Occasional participation: B=86 / Little or no participation: C=76. Fine-tuning of percentage points may occur, reflecting student performance.

Note that attendance at all classes and field studies is required and expected and is not credited as participation. Failure to attend will have a negative influence on the participation grade, however.

**Grade calculation**
Assignment 1  15%
Assignment 2  15%
Assignment 3  15%
Assignment 4 15%
Field Notebook 20%
Participation 20%

How to Get a Good Grade

- Involve yourself! Allow yourself the luxury of taking a genuine interest in the course, i.e. in ‘food’. It may not be your core field or interest, but why not join the many students who have been surprised at how interesting it actually is to suddenly understand the history and nutrition we consume.
- Get organized! Enter all due dates in a calendar and set aside time to work on assignments and prepare for class.
- Prepare for class! Every class!
- Take good notes! You will be graded on your analytical thinking.
- Participate! Sharing your thoughts and ideas in class is not just important for the participation grade, it is one of the best tools for developing your analytical skills.
- Follow the directions! A detailed description and assessment rubric will be distributed for each assignment.

COURSE SCHEDULE
A detailed daily schedule will be distributed at the start of the course. What follows is a draft schedule.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event/Activity</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tue Jun 22, 2021</td>
<td>LECTURE: Introduction to class</td>
<td>9am to 12pm</td>
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<td>CLASS SOCIAL: Greek Cooking class</td>
<td>5pm to 8pm</td>
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<td>Wed Jun 23, 2021</td>
<td>EXCURSION: Kokotos Winery</td>
<td>9am to 1pm</td>
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<td>LECTURE: The phenomenology of taste</td>
<td>3pm to 5pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thu Jun 24, 2021</td>
<td>LECTURE: The Social Sciences of Food</td>
<td>9am to 12pm</td>
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<td>EXCURSION: Kafeneio</td>
<td>1pm to 3pm</td>
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<td>Fri Jun 25, 2021</td>
<td>LECTURE: The History of Food in Greece</td>
<td>9am to 12pm</td>
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<td>FIELD WORK: Local Farmers Market</td>
<td>1pm to 3pm</td>
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<td>Sat Jun 26, 2021</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 1 due: Ethnographic Photoo</td>
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<td>EXCURSION: Diamantis Organic Farm, Marathon Beach</td>
<td>10am to 7pm</td>
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<td>Tue Jun 29, 2021</td>
<td>WALKING TOUR: Central Market including visit to the Mediterranean Food Store</td>
<td>8:30am to 1:30pm</td>
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<td>LECTURE: Food Language and Spice</td>
<td>2pm to 4pm</td>
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<td>Wed Jun 30, 2021</td>
<td>EXCURSION: The Museum of Decorative Bread</td>
<td>8am to 3pm</td>
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<td>STUDY TOUR ORIENTATION &amp; COPENHAGEN ORIENTATION</td>
<td>4pm to 5pm</td>
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<td>Thu Jul 1, 2021</td>
<td>NAXOS: Lecture on the Tourist Gaze</td>
<td>2pm to 4pm</td>
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<td>NAXOS: Presentation from the Agricultural Cooperative</td>
<td>4pm to 5pm</td>
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<td>NAXOS: WALKING TOUR of the Castro</td>
<td>7pm to 8:30pm</td>
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<td>Fri Jul 2, 2021</td>
<td>NAXOS: DINNER at Agricultural Cooperative Restaurant 1926</td>
<td>8:30 pm to 10 pm</td>
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<td>Sat Jul 3, 2021</td>
<td>NAXOS: EXCURSION: Olive Press Museum</td>
<td>10 am to 11:30 pm</td>
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<td>NAXOS: Chalki walk and visit to the Valindras Distillery</td>
<td>10:30 am to 12 pm</td>
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<td>NAXOS: Aperianthos visit and lunch</td>
<td>1:30 pm to 3:30 pm</td>
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<td>Sun Jul 4, 2021</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 2 due: Staging Tradition</td>
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<td>Mon Jul 5, 2021</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 2 due: Staging Tradition</td>
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<td>Tue Jul 6, 2021</td>
<td>EXCURSION: Canal tour of Copenhagen</td>
<td>10 am to 12 pm</td>
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<td>WALKING TOUR: Vesterbro, food and gentrification</td>
<td>12 pm to 1 pm</td>
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<td>GROUP LUNCH at Tove Ditlevsens Mindehave</td>
<td>1 pm to 2:30 pm</td>
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<td>ACADEMIC VISIT: The Community House Absalon and new ways of eating together</td>
<td>2:30 pm to 3:30 pm</td>
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<td>EXCURSION: The Meat Packing District</td>
<td>3:30 pm to 5 pm</td>
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<td>Wed Jul 7, 2021</td>
<td>LECTURE: The History of Food in Denmark</td>
<td>10 am to 1 pm</td>
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<td>EXCURSION: Flynderup Gaard</td>
<td>1 pm to 7 pm</td>
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<td>Thu Jul 8, 2021</td>
<td>LECTURE: Eating Status: Bourdieu and Social Distinction</td>
<td>10 am to 1 pm</td>
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<td>FIELD WORK: Supermarkets and Social Status</td>
<td>2 pm to 4 pm</td>
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<td>Fri Jul 9, 2021</td>
<td>ASSIGNMENT 3 due: Observation Exercise</td>
<td>due by 12:59 am</td>
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<td>SAMSØ: Bio-dynamic Farm Yduns Have</td>
<td>11 am to 1:30 pm</td>
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<td>SAMSØ: Hike</td>
<td>1:30 pm to 4:30 pm</td>
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<td>SAMSØ: Optional Bike tour</td>
<td>8:30 pm to 10 pm</td>
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<td>Sat Jul 10, 2021</td>
<td>SAMSØ: Vegetable Safari with the Kjeldal Brothers</td>
<td>10 am to 12 pm</td>
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<td>SAMSØ: Tour of Samsø Brewery and group lunch</td>
<td>12 pm to 3 pm</td>
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<td>SAMSØ: Social: Labyrinth</td>
<td>3 pm to 5 pm</td>
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<td>SAMSØ: Class Social: Bonfire and Snobrød</td>
<td>9 pm to 11 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sun Jul 11, 2021</td>
<td>SAMSØ: Visit sustainable farmer Jørgen Tranberg</td>
<td>10 am to 12 pm</td>
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<td>SAMSØ: Group lunch at Skipperly</td>
<td>1 pm to 2:30 pm</td>
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<td>SAMSØ: Visit to Museum of Samsø</td>
<td>4 pm to 5:30 pm</td>
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Wed Jul 14, 2021
LECTURE: Food and Nationalism 10am to 1pm
FIELD WORK by bike in different neighborhoods 2pm to 5pm

Thur Jul 15, 2021
LECTURE: Working professionally with food anthropology 10am to 1pm
LECTURE: Empirical Spirits distillery 1pm to 5pm

Fri Jul 16, 2021
LECTURE: Wrap Up 10am to 1pm
CLASS SOCIAL: Cooking class at Meyers Madhof 4pm to 9pm

READINGS
Preliminary list of required readings (to be read in preparation for class):


Various Handouts as indicated in the syllabus.

**Supplementary readings (will be referred to in lectures or parts of which will be workshoped during class time):**


