“You Are What You Eat: A Course in Food Science”

First Year Seminar Syllabus

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*Office Hours:* M 6-7pm, W 10-11am. If these don’t work for you, email me and we can set up a time.

**Introduction:**  This course aims to teach critical thinking and research skills. We will use in class discussions, presentations, and writing to communicate our point of view and back up our conclusions with scientific evidence. I will teach you how to do this - how to research a scientific topic, design experiments, make a clear, informative presentation, and write research papers.

1. **Discussions:** As a discussion **PARTICIPANT** you will need to do the following prior to the discussion:
2. Look up additional information that supports an argument for or against the topic. Choose a side and back it up. Repeat, gathering evidence for BOTH sides.
3. Record your information sources so that you can reference them if asked to.
4. Read the reading assignment.
5. Think of at least 1 question from the reading that you think is pertinent to the discussion. Be prepared to answer your own question.
6. PARTICIPATE! There will be discussion leaders, but everyone’s participation is expected.

Discussion Topic #1: Should we eat genetically modified foods?

Discussion Topic #2: Are organic foods better for the world?

Discussion Topic #3: Are plastics toxic? Should I stop using my Nalgene bottle?

Discussion Topic #4: Should we ban trans fats?

Discussion Topic #5: Should we use corn to power our cars?

As a discussion **LEADER**: When it is your group’s turn to lead the discussion, you need to provide pertinent material for the class (the class period BEFORE the discussion) and introduce the topic to get the discussion going (10 m). Leading the discussion counts as “Presentation #2”. I will lead the first discussion.

1. **Presentations:**  Presentation #1: Working in groups of 2-3 – present one of the chapters from The Curious Cook (10-15 m). Presentation #2: Working in groups of 4, you will prepare a 10 minute presentation that explains the background of your discussion topic and will kick off the discussion. This will happen just before we begin the discussion that you choose. Presentation #3: Working alone, prepare a 10 minute presentation on the same topic as your research paper.
2. **Papers:**

Short papers: There are 3 short papers due on the following topics:

1. Describe an experience you have had with food. 2 pgs, double spaced, size 12 font.
2. Select one of the discussion topics that you would like to explore in detail. Write in the form of a mini-review. You must discuss both sides! 5 pgs, double spaced, size 12 font. Due on the day of the discussion.

Example: If you choose Discussion Topic #3, the paper about whether or not plastics are toxic is due on October 6 and you will hand out reading material to the class on October 1.

1. This will be on the same topic as your Research paper and final presentation. 5 pgs, double spaced, size 12 font.

Term Paper:Meet with me to discuss your topic. It should be a scientific, food topic that you are passionately interested in, want to learn more about, and able to discuss for 10-15 pages (double spaced, size 12 font). More details will be given in class.

1. **Other:**

Readings: In order to intelligently discuss topics, background reading will be handed out from the group that leads the discussion. In addition to the assigned reading material, you also need to research the current class topic and find readings of your own that can add to our class discussion. We will balance our readings with a piece from scientific literature and a piece from current media (magazines, popular (non-fiction) books, reliable internet sources, films, etc).

Dinners:We have a dinner with the chancellor scheduled for October 22, 6-8pm. This is a dress up event and we will cut class short that day so you can get ready. We will have another dinner this term at my place and can discuss that more on Day 1.

Advising**:** I want to know how your classes are going so schedule a time to meet with me in the first 2 weeks. We will meet again for Winter advising.

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| *Grade* | *%* |
| A | 90-100 |
| B | 80-90 |
| C | 70-80 |
| D | 60-70 |
| F | Below 60 |

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| --- | --- |
| *Assignment* | *%* |
| Research Paper | 25 |
| Presentation #1 | 5  |
| Presentation #2 | 10 |
| Presentation #3 | 15 |
| Final Exam | 15 |
| Discussion involvement | 15 |
| Short paper #1 | 5  |
| Short paper #2 | 5 |
| Short paper #3 | 5 |

**Evaluation and Grades:**

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| September 8 | Introduction to course goals, evaluation and assignments.Assignment: Short paper #1.Reading: Chapter 1 of Omnivore’s Dilemma (on reserve in the library). Start movie: King Corn |
| September 10 | Finish movie: King CornDue: Short paper #1. |
| September 14 | Last Day to drop/add classes!  |
| September 15 | Looking up references and evaluating sources of reference. BRING LAPTOP! |
| September 17 | Learning Survey (4-5pm) How to make a good presentation. |
| September 22 | Discussion topic #1Work on Presentation #1 and research topics for paper. |
| September 24 | Presentation #1 (all 6 groups) |
| September 29 | Dinner at Dr. Knowles’ OR experimenting with food! |
| October 1 | Discussion Topic #2Finalize your research paper topic and discuss with me!  |
| October 6 | Discussion #3 |
| October 8 | Career Center presentation. |
| October 13 | Sense of Taste introduction. |
| October 15 | Peer review session from the writing center. Bring research paper introductions/background – exchange and evaluate one another.  |
| October 20 | Due: Short Paper #3 |
| October 22 | Chancellor’s Dinner – 6-8pm |
| October 27 | Discussion Topic #4 |
| October 29 | Sushi Dinner and course selection for next term. Bring your APR and laptop.Readings: Papers that pertain to next discussion. |
| November 3 | Discussion Topic #5Work on research papers or presentations. |
| November 5 | Work on research papers or presentations.Presentations (2) |
| November 10 | Due: Research papers. Presentation #3(7) |
| November 12 | Presentation #3 (7) |
| Finals week | Final exam.  |