NS 2450 Social Science Perspectives on Food and Nutrition
Course Information 2017
Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
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Instructor: Jeffery Sobal, PhD, 407 Savage Hall, js57@cornell.edu 607/255-6015
Appointments: Contact Professor Sobal by e-mail

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Brian Lo, DNS Graduate student, bl592@cornell.edu
Bonnie Patchen, DNS Graduate student, bkp44@cornell.edu

Administrative Assistance: Office of Administrative Support, 119 Savage Hall, dnshelpdesk@cornell.edu

Class Time and Room: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:10-11:25, Room G73 MVR Hall

Website: http://www.blackboard.cornell.edu/ Website registration is required. Enrolled students will be automatically enrolled in the website.

Office Hours: See the Teaching Team page on the Blackboard website for NS2450

Course Description

NS2450 uses theories, concepts, and methods from the social sciences to examine food, eating, and nutrition. The course encourages students to consider food and nutrition beyond their own experiences and recognize how social science concepts, theories, and methods provide useful tools for understanding and addressing food and nutrition issues. The food choice process model provides the framework for exploring the broad scope of the social science aspects of food and nutrition. Readings include empirical and theoretical research papers as well as review articles and chapters. Students complete weekly written homework assignments, weekly tests, a qualitative research project, and a quantitative research project.

Learning Outcomes

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Explain how concepts and theories from the social sciences apply to food and nutrition issues and help to understand personal, social, cultural, economic, and historical variations in food, eating, and nutrition
- Describe basic social facts about food, eating, and nutrition
- Demonstrate basic principles and procedures for conducting and interpreting qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys to understand food choice, including protection of human participants
- Demonstrate appreciation for personal, social, cultural, economic, and historical variations and diversity in food, eating, and nutrition
- Write and speak clearly and logically about the social science perspectives on food and eating using appropriate terms and standard grammar

Prerequisites: Students are expected to have previously taken an NS course. Transfer students and students who have officially changed majors to NS, GPHS, or HBHS may take another NS course and 2450 concurrently. See Professor Sobal if you do not have the prerequisites for this class or if you have questions about enrollment. Students must be registered, attending class, and completing class work by the 3rd class session to be enrolled in the course. Students cannot add the course after the third class session.
Course Requirements

1) **Attendance & Preparation**: Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive in class on time, and stay for the full class period. Students are responsible for all material in class and in readings.

2) **Readings**: Links to the required readings will be available electronically on the Blackboard website. Some additional readings may be distributed in class. Most required readings are accompanied by a study guide to focus attention on the key points in the reading. **All readings should be done before attending the class for which the reading is assigned.**

3) **iClickers**: Classes will use iClickers that can be purchased at the Cornell Store, or handheld and tablet devices can be registered to use to respond to iClicker questions. For information click on the NS2450 Blackboard button for Course Information Button about iClickers.

4) **Human Participant Training**: All NS2450 students are required to complete the on-line Cornell Training Program for Students in Research about ethics of research with human participants. Students should access the training using the instructions on the NS 2450 Blackboard page. This short supplementary training module is designed just for students. At the end of the module, there is an online quiz which you must complete and score at least 80% to pass. After you pass the quiz, you must print a hard copy of the report of your test score to submit with your proposal for Project #1 due on 9/7/17. For students who have previously completed IRB training: Cornell uses the training program delivered by **CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative)**. If you have an existing account with CITI and the account is affiliated with Cornell, your training records are available through the login above. If you have an existing account with CITI that is not affiliated with Cornell, you will be given the option to make your training information available to Cornell after logging in.

5) **Homework Assignments**: Written homework assignments ask students to interpret and apply material in the required readings to their own experiences and observations. Homework assignments are posted on Blackboard and must be turned in electronically on Blackboard before 10:00 AM on Thursdays before class. Plan to submit before this time to allow for potential computer problems in doing your submission. Late, e-mail, or written homework assignments will not be accepted. Students should be prepared to participate in class discussion based on the homework completed. The semester is split into two parts, and students must complete at least 5 of the 7 possible homework assignments before fall break and at least 5 of the 7 possible homework assignments after fall break. The homework assignments are graded for care and thought in answering questions and for clarity and quality of written expression. Students may complete as many homework assignments as they wish, but only the highest 5 grades will be counted before fall break and only the highest 5 grades will be counted after fall break.

6) **Papers**: Students must complete two required projects that provide experience in social science research methods. Project #1 involves qualitative interview research. Project #2 focuses on survey questionnaire research. Handouts describing the projects in detail will be distributed in class and posted on Blackboard. Late papers/proposals will be penalized for each day they are late.
7) **Tests:** Ten tests will be given during class on Tuesdays: five before fall break, and five after fall break. Students may drop the lowest score of the first five tests and the lowest score of the second five tests. A final test will be given during the university scheduled exam period. There are no scheduled makeup tests. Requests for makeup exams due to religious holidays, exam conflicts, illness, and university obligations are considered on a case-by-case basis; documentation of circumstances may be required. The final test date will be announced later in the semester. Students must schedule travel plans around the final test date because the final test will not be given before the officially scheduled date and time.

8) **Participation:** Students are expected to participate in class discussions, drawing upon required readings and their own knowledge and experiences. When students share their views and experiences in class discussion, everyone learns. Email is the official route for communication for NS2450. The teaching team will do its best to respond to e-mails in a timely manner.

9) **Grading:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+ = 100-97</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A = 96-93</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A- = 92-90</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+ = 89-87</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B = 86-83</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B- = 82-80</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+ = 79-77</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C = 76-73</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C- = 72-70</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+ = 69-67</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D = 66-63</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D- = 62-60</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F = 59-0</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

- **Students may not retake any tests, rewrite any homeworks or projects, or do extra work for credit.**
- Questions about grades must be submitted in writing to the professor and the TA's within 10 days after the grade is first posted on Blackboard.
- The professor and TAs will determine overall course grades after the final test during final exam period.
- Grades are posted on Blackboard. Scores for tests and assignments are weighted according to their percent of final grade indicated above. Final letter grades are based on the sum of weighted scores as follows: A+ = 100-97, A = 96-93, A- = 92-90, B+ = 89-87, B = 86-83, B- = 82-80, C+ = 79-77, C = 76-73, C- = 72-70, D+ = 69-67, D = 66-63, D- = 62-60, F = 59-0.

**Academic Conduct**

Each student is expected to abide by the Cornell University Code of Academic Integrity and Acknowledging Work of Others which is described at [http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm](http://cuinfo.cornell.edu/aic.cfm). Failure to abide by the Code will result in charges of violating academic integrity in accordance with the University’s formal academic integrity procedures. Students should complete the Cornell tutorial about plagiarism at [http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/](http://plagiarism.arts.cornell.edu/tutorial/). All submitted work must be the students own work unless the instructions for an assignment specify otherwise.

Sharing your electronic files for homework or papers with others and using electronic files from other students is considered a violation of the Cornell code of academic integrity.

© Students must not copy, share, post, quote, or cite any materials used in this course without permission.
Class Interactions
Students are expected to interact honestly, responsibly, and respectfully with each other, the instructor, and teaching assistants at all times.

Student Well-Being
This course involves diverse assignments and a steady work load. Students must plan their time carefully to keep up with the readings, weekly tests, and weekly written homework. The two projects require substantial independent work, planning, and self-direction to bring them to completion. Students should seek help from the TAs and the instructors if they do not understand assignments or are having trouble with the course material.

This course assumes that students are taking an appropriate load of courses. Learning and academic performance are enhanced when a person has a reasonable number of courses and extracurricular activities along with a healthy diet, adequate sleep, sufficient relaxation and recreation, and connections with others. Students should follow University guidelines to take care of themselves both physically and mentally. Asking for help is a sign of strength. When you have questions or face challenges be sure to use advisors and counselors in residence life, your college, your department, your courses, and Gannett Health Center. See the Gannett website for suggestions for stress management.

Illness and Other Extenuating Circumstances
A student should immediately inform the course instructors if they will miss a test or a due date for a written assignment because of illness or extenuating circumstances. It is the student’s obligation to send the instructor an e-mail before or at the time of the missed work or if necessary to arrange to have the information sent by another person (e.g. friend, family member, health provider, college counselor). The e-mail message must state: 1) which test/assignment was missed, 2) the specific reason the test/assignment due date was missed, and 3) the date that the illness/extenuating circumstances began and ended (or are expected to end). The contact information for the instructor is: Dr. Jeffery Sobal: js57@cornell.edu office telephone (607) 255-6015.

When informed at the time the situation arises, the instructor will determine how the student will be accommodated. Students who receive such accommodations are expected to stay in communication with the instructor according to the established agreement. Failure to stay in communication with the instructor as agreed will result in no additional accommodation.

The instructor will not grant requests for accommodation when the student has failed to notify them at the time the problem has occurred. Requests for extended deadlines and makeup tests will not be made for late notification. For example, the instructor will deny requests made at the end of the term to turn in missed assignments by students who claim that they were ill or had other issues at the earlier time the assignment was due. Such requests must be made at the time the problem occurs.

Study Skills Support
Students who want support in study skills such as time management, effective reading, exam preparation, note taking, and other abilities can participate in the programs of the Learning Strategies Center at their website.

Writing Support
Students can obtain assistance with writing at the Walk-In Services of the Knight Institute for Writing in the Disciplines that are described at their website.
Disabilities
In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, the instructors are available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made no less than 3 weeks before accommodation is requested, except for extraordinary circumstances, so arrangements can be made. Students are required to provide a letter from Cornell’s Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for requested accommodations.

Resources for Personal Nutrition Interests and Concerns
Students seeking advice for personal interests or problems related to food, eating, or nutrition should use Cornell’s link to many resources at the Gannett Health Center website.

Course Organization
NS2450 is organized according to the Food Choice Process Model, which identifies key factors and processes involved in food activities.

The first half of the course covers the bottom half of the model – food activities and the personal food system. This part of the course takes a constructivist perspective on food choice and emphasizes qualitative research methods. After an introduction to the model and a holistic perspective on food behaviors, the class focuses on the construction of food choice values and the cognitive and social processes through which people manage these values in food behavior.

The second half of the course covers the top half of the Food Choice Process Model that comprises influences and the life course. This part of the course uses constructionist and other perspectives on food choice and includes qualitative and quantitative research. The topics include an overview of influences, discussion of eleven influences on food choices representing ideals (culture and ethnicity), personal factors (roles and identities), resources (human capital and economic capital), relationships (families and networks), and contexts (built environments, food systems, and media), the life course, and also examination of social changes and food choices.

The Food Choice Process Model*

*This diagram is adapted from:
Connors M, Bisogni CA, Sobal J, Devine CM. Appetite 2001; 36:189-200;

Further information about the Food Choice Process Model is available at the Food Choice Research Group Website: http://www.human.cornell.edu/dns/foodchoice/
### Fall Break 10/10 (Tue)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class. date (day)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due (classes covered)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/12 (Thur)</td>
<td>Quantitative Methods: Surveys</td>
<td>Homework #8 (class 15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17 (Tue)</td>
<td>Ideals: Culture</td>
<td>Test 6 (classes 13,14,15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/19 (Thur)</td>
<td>Ideals: Acculturation and Ethnicity</td>
<td>Homework #9 (classes 16,17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/24 (Tue)</td>
<td>Personal Factors: Roles and Gender</td>
<td>Test 7 (classes 16,17)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/26 (Thur)</td>
<td>Personal Factors: Identities</td>
<td>Homework #10 (classes 18,19)</td>
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### Thanksgiving Break 11/23 (Thur)

<table>
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<th>Class. date (day)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments Due (classes covered)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/28 (Tue)</td>
<td>Life Course</td>
<td>Homework #14 (classes 26,27,28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/30 (Thur)</td>
<td>Social Environments</td>
<td>Survey Design/Sampling Report due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Final Test** will be 12/6/17 at 9:00 AM and covers only material in classes 24,25,26,27,28