2015

FREN 320 French Cuisine and Culinary Culture

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FREN 320: French Cuisine and Culinary Culture
Intersession 2015: May 11 – May 22
MTWRF 8:30-12:15 / CLC 406

Professor: Dr. Nicholas Shangler / Schott 903 / shanglern@xavier.edu

Course Description: There has long been an almost folkloric association between France and fine cuisine. French society and history are intertwined with its culinary heritage, and have been since the earliest days of the Ancien Régime. Following the Revolution, French cuisine took on a truly modern aspect as it morphed into something far more democratic. The art of gastronomy, the invention of the restaurant, and a literature of food all come together by the nineteenth century, reinforcing the ties between food and national identity. French food came to be widely considered the finest in the world, a mythology that persists even today. This course examines how the history of French culinary culture evolved as it did. Our study of France, as a particular example, will also lead us to explore more broadly the connection between place, people, and food. We launch our investigation with the question: how and why is this relationship distinctive in France?

Course Objectives: You can expect to have obtained the following skills in increasing depth upon successful completion of this course.
* Understand the strong relationships between place, consumption, and culture.
* Develop a French vocabulary for talking about food, following recipes, and reading labels.
* Conduct self-directed research on a variety of cultural and culinary topics.
* Synthesize, analyze, and convey information orally and in writing to a given public.

These objectives prepare students to meet the following goals and student learning objectives of the University Core:

1. Articulately express themselves orally.
2. Articulately express themselves in writing.
3. Think and to solve problems, critically, analytically, and creatively.
5. Understand the methodology of the humanities.
10. Analyze societal issues critically in terms of human values.
11. Develop a sense of compassionate solidarity with others.
13. Develop an understanding of the opportunities cultural diversity presents.

Required Texts and Materials:
* All readings will be made available either electronically via Canvas, or directly from the instructor. There is nothing to buy from the bookstore.
* You will be required to spend some money for other materials, such as food and art supplies. The combined cost of such items will not exceed what you would normally pay for books and other class resources.
**Class Format:** This is a summer intersession course, which meets every morning for nearly four hours. Therefore, the format of the class meetings will necessarily differ from a traditional semester course. Each day we will do a variety of activities, and we may come and go from the classroom (CLC 406), though you should first come to the classroom each day unless instructed otherwise beforehand. Daily activities may include: discussing readings, viewing and/or discussing films, small group work, individual research, hands-on culinary learning, and more.

**Language:** As a 300-level French course, you should expect that you will use French in the completion of certain exercises and activities. The course will not, however, be conducted entirely in French, due to the range of student experience with the language and the challenging nature of the subject matter. The requirements and guidelines regarding the use of either French or English will be clearly noted for each assignment or activity.

**Cell phones:** It has been well documented that cell phone usage during class is hazardous to your health, your grade, and your professor’s opinion of you. Please turn electronics off and your mind on.

**Assignments and Evaluation:** You will be evaluated in a number of ways to determine your grade at the conclusion of the course. Because of the nature and format of the course, the largest part of the grade is attendance and energetic participation.

1) Participation: 50%
What does this mean? Come on time and prepared to all class meetings. “Prepared” means having completed all assigned reading, viewing, cooking, planning, writing, etc. Once in class, contribute freely and enthusiastically to discussions and activities.

2) Food & Culture journal: 20%

3) Region presentations (in partners): 10% (2 x 5% each)

4) Final food project: 10%

5) Written portion of final project: 10%