



El Camino College
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD – Official

Subject:	NUTR
Course Number:	150
Descriptive Title:	Food and Culture
Division:	Industry and Technology
Department:	Nutrition Science
Course Disciplines:	Family and Consumer and Studies
Catalog Description:	This course explores the relationship between food, culture, and health in diverse communities. Students explore the origins, preparation methods, and symbolic meanings of traditional foods from around the world, with attention to how religion, history, geography, and migration influence dietary practices. The evolution of American food culture is examined highlighting contributions from Native American, European American, African American, Asian American, and Latinx communities. The course also investigates how globalization and acculturation have transformed traditional cuisines and contributed to contemporary American food habits. Emphasis is placed on understanding food access, nutrition disparities, and the role of cultural competency in promoting health and social equity.
Prerequisite:	
Co-requisite:	
Recommended Preparation:	Eligibility for English 1A/English C1000 or equivalent
Enrollment Limitation:	
Hours Lecture (per week):	3
Hours Laboratory (per week):	0
Outside Study Hours:	6
Total Course Hours:	54
Course Units:	3
Grading Method:	Letter Grade only
Credit Status:	Credit, degree applicable
Transfer CSU:	Yes
Effective Date:	Fall 2024
Transfer UC:	Yes
Effective Date:	Fall 2024
General Education ECC:	
Term:	
Other:	
CSU GE:	
Term:	
Other:	

IGETC:	Area 4 - Social and Behavioral Sciences
Term:	
Other:	

Student Learning Outcomes:	SLO #1 Following textbook reading and class discussion, students will be able to describe the staple foods, meal patterns and etiquette, and therapeutic foods used in various cultures. SLO #2 Following textbook reading, class discussion, and individual research, students will be able to compare and contrast the traditional cuisine of one culture or ethnic group to the contemporary food habits in the American diet. SLO #3 Following textbook reading and class discussion, students will be able to demonstrate culturally appropriate nutrition intervention strategies to promote behavior change in diverse populations.
Course Objectives:	1. Examine key factors that influence food habits and dietary practices. 2. Review different cultural outlooks on disease, illness, and sickness and healing practices. 3. Describe the importance of cultural humility during communication and nutrition education. 4. Examine factors contributing to the immigration patterns and timing of various ethnic groups to America. 5. Describe factors impacting indigenous food availability for ethnic groups prior to immigration to America. 6. Describe and analyze staple foods, traditional meal patterns, and therapeutic dietary practices characteristic of various cultural groups. 7. Discuss the influence of cultural diversity on the American diet, economy, and perspectives on health. 8. Utilizing current epidemiological data, evaluate the nutritional adequacy of culturally diverse diets. 9. Discuss issues of food access, insecurity, and sustainability in both global and local contexts.

Major Topics:

I. NUTRITION BASICS (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Nutrient classes and food sources
- B. Current guidelines and recommendations
- C. Characteristics of the Standard American Diet

II. FOOD AND CULTURE (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Acculturation and assimilation
- B. Factors influencing food habits and behaviors
- C. Cultural competency and intercultural nutrition

III. AMERICAN DIET AND HEALTH PARADOX (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Industrialization and changes to food systems
- B. Overweight and obesity trends
- C. Chronic disease prevalence in developed countries
- D. Misinformation and psychosocial influences on food habits

IV. TRADITIONAL HEALTH BELIEFS AND PRACTICES (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Biomedical worldview
- B. Disease, illness, and sickness
- C. Cultural perceptions
- D. Healing practices

V. INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Verbal and non-verbal communication

- B. Communication skills
- C. Nutrition assessment and nutrition education

VI. FOOD AND RELIGION (3 hours, lecture)

- A. Western Religions
 - 1. Judaism
 - 2. Christianity
 - 3. Islam
- B. Eastern Religions
 - 1. Hinduism
 - 2. Buddhism

VII. CULTURAL INFLUENCES (27 hours, lecture)

- A. Native Americans
 - 1. Cultural perspective
 - 2. Traditional foods and food habits
 - 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States
- B. Northern and Southern Europeans
 - 1. Cultural Perspective
 - 2. Traditional foods and food habits
 - 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States
- C. Central Europeans, People of the Former Soviet Union, and Scandinavians
 - 1. Cultural perspective
 - 2. Traditional foods and food habits
 - 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States
- D. Africans, African Americans, and Black Americans
 - 1. Cultural perspective
 - 2. Traditional foods and food habits
 - 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States
- E. Mexicans and Central Americans
 - 1. Cultural perspective
 - 2. Traditional foods and food habits
 - 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States
- F. Caribbean Islanders and South Americans
 - 1. Cultural perspective
 - 2. Traditional foods and food habits
 - 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States
- G. East Asians (Chinese, Japanese, Korean)
 - 1. Cultural perspective
 - 2. Traditional foods and food habits
 - 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States
- H. Southeast Asians and Residents of Oceania
 - 1. Cultural perspective
 - 2. Traditional foods and food habits
 - 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States
- I. People of the Balkans and the Middle East
 - 1. Cultural perspective

	2. Traditional foods and food habits 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States J. South Asians 1. Cultural perspective 2. Traditional foods and food habits 3. Contemporary foods and food habits in the United States VIII. REGIONAL AMERICANS (3 hours, lecture) A. American Regional Food Habits B. The Northeast 1. Regional profile 2. Traditional fare 3. Health implications C. The Midwest 1. Regional profile 2. Traditional fare 3. Health implications D. The South 1. Regional profile 2. Traditional fare 3. Health implications E. The West 1. Regional profile 2. Traditional fare 3. Health implications IX. FOOD ACCESS AND SOCIAL CHANGE (6 hours, lecture) A. Food surplus and food scarcity B. Food Insecurity and hunger C. Malnutrition and at-risk countries D. Global and local nutrition assistance programs E. Sustainable lifestyle and plant-based diets
Total Lecture Hours:	54
Total Laboratory Hours:	0
Total Hours:	54
Primary Method of Evaluation:	1) Substantial writing assignments
Typical Assignment Using Primary Method of Evaluation:	Compose a one-to-two-page report analyzing the message, target population, and cultural competency of a nutrition advertisement or campaign. Explain the importance of cultural competence in nutrition education. Submit report to the instructor.

Critical Thinking Assignment 1:	Compose a three- to five-page report detailing the traditional cuisine of one chosen culture and compare and contrast to the American diet discussing the influence on contemporary food habits of the United States. Submit report to the instructor.
Critical Thinking Assignment 2:	Compose a two- to three-page written report and give a verbal presentation after visiting an ethnic food market to discuss the traditional significance of foods observed, product substitution and ingredient availability, and influences on health. Submit report to the instructor.
Other Evaluation Methods:	Matching Items, Performance Exams, Quizzes, Term or Other Papers, True/False, Written Homework, Multiple Choice
If Other:	
Instructional Methods:	Discussion, Group Activities, Lecture, Multimedia presentations
If other:	
Work Outside of Class:	Required reading, Study, Written work (such as essay/composition/report/analysis/research)
If Other:	
Up-To-Date Representative Texts:	Kittler, P., Sucher, K., & Nahikian-Nelms, M., <i>Food and Culture</i> 7 th ed. Cengage Learning, 2017. (Discipline Standard) Furstenau, N., Safaii-Waite, S., Sucher, K., & Nahikian-Nelms, M., <i>Food and Culture</i> , 8 th ed. Cengage Learning, 2024.
Alternative Texts:	
Required Supplementary Readings:	
Other Required Materials:	
Requisite	
Category	
Requisite course:	
Requisite and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s).	
Requisite Skill:	
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill(s). if applicable	
Requisite course:	

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Requisite Skill:	Eligibility for English 1A/C1000
Requisite Skill and Matching skill(s): Bold the requisite skill. List the corresponding course objective under each skill(s), if applicable	Summarize, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize college-level texts. Write a well-reasoned, well-supported expository essay that demonstrates application of the academic writing process.
Enrollment Limitations and Category:	
Enrollment Limitations Impact:	
Course Created by:	Jill Gray
Date:	10/13/2023
Original Board Approval Date:	3/21/2024
Effective Term:	FALL 2024

Last Reviewed by: Myra Bremen
 Last Reviewed Date: 10/23/2025
 Last Board Approval Date: 1/21/2026
 Effective Term: FALL 2026