

Syllabus of Record

Program: CET Barcelona

Course Code / Title: BC/SPNS 245 Taste of Catalonia: Food, Culture, and Tradition

Contact Hours: 45

Recommended Credits: 3

Primary Discipline / Suggested Cross Listings: Spanish Studies / Cultural Studies, History, Sociology

Language of Instruction: English

Prerequisites / Requirements: None

Description

This course examines the gastronomy and culture of Catalonia, emphasizing historical events that have shaped the region and their impact on contemporary dynamics. Through an exploration of Catalonia's distinctive culinary traditions, students analyze the role of food in shaping identity. The course also explores the multifaceted dimensions of food tourism, including its cultural significance, economic potential, and societal influence. Utilizing experiential learning and practical applications, students develop cultural sensitivity and critical thinking skills.

Objectives

Through their participation in this course, students will:

- Analyze how history and geography have shaped Catalan cuisine.
- Distinguish gastronomy's role in Catalan identity and cultural heritage.
- Explore the cultural and economic impact of food tourism in Barcelona and Catalonia
- Apply food-related discussions to enhance critical thinking and communication skills.
- Engage in experiential learning to understand traditional and contemporary food practices.

Requirements

Students are expected to attend each class and field study course component, as outlined in the CET Attendance Policy. Class time will be set aside for discussion: students are expected to actively participate in these sessions. All assignments must be submitted via Canvas unless otherwise noted.

Graded assignments include:

- **Participation:** Active participation in and contribution to all discussions, activities and site visits. Students are expected to complete the readings

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listed for each session (approximately 10-20 pages) prior to each class meeting time, and to participate in class discussions.

- **Journal:** Students will maintain a weekly journal to document their reflections on Catalan food, culture, and identity, connecting course themes to real-world experiences. Each weekly entry should be approximately 300–500 words, for a total of 13 entries. The first entry will consist of personal expectations and initial impressions of Catalan cuisine (1% of total journal grade).
- **Written reports:**
 - #1: Food and culture marketing poster: Choose a dish with significant cultural meaning from any background and design a marketing poster for it. Present the poster (5-10 minutes) to the class.
 - #2: A report comparing Catalan and American (or own national) food culture (1,000-1,500 words).
- **Midterm project:** In groups (5-6 students), conduct an interview on Catalan cuisine. Each group will speak with a food professional (chef, market vendor, farmer, food historian, sommelier, etc.) and submit a 1,500–2,000 word written report and 15-20 minute presentation in class.
- **Final project:** In groups, record a video of cooking a Catalan dish applying course knowledge. Students bring the dish to share with the class and give a 15 minute presentation explaining its cultural significance.

Grading

The final grade is determined as follows:

- | | |
|---|-----|
| • Participation (<i>see rubric below</i>) | 15% |
| • Journal (1st at 1%, 12 at 2%) | 25% |
| • Written report #1 at | 7% |
| ○ Poster: 3.5% | |
| ○ Presentation: 3.5% | |
| • Written report #2 | 3% |
| • Midterm project | 20% |
| ○ Report: 10% | |
| ○ Presentation: 10% | |
| • Final project | 30% |

Class Participation Grading Rubric

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	A – 90-100% Exemplary	B – 80-89% Proficient	C – 70-79% Developing	D – 60-69% Unacceptable	F – 0-59% Missing
Frequency of class participation	Actively contributes 2+ times per meeting	Actively contributes at least 1 time per meeting	Actively contributes at least half of the time during term	Actively contributes less than half of the time during term	Does not contribute
Quality of class participation*	Contribution is always thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, frequently interacting with peers	Contribution is mostly thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, usually interacting with peers	Contribution is somewhat thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, sometimes interacting with peers	Contribution is rarely thoughtful, accurate, and constructive, rarely interacting with peers	Does not contribute or interact with peers
Level of class preparation	Always fully prepared and on task	Mostly prepared and on task	Somewhat prepared and on task	Rarely prepared and on task	Consistently unprepared and not on task

Readings / Resources

Generalitat de Catalunya. *Catalonia World Culinary Region 2025*, 2025.
<https://act.gencat.cat/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Catalonia-World-Culinary-Region-2025.pdf>.

Johannes, Venetia. *Nourishing the Nation: Food as National Identity in Catalonia*. Berghahn Books, 2022.

Lin, Min-Pei, Estela Marine-Roig, and Nayra Llonch-Molina. "Gastronomic Experience (Co)Creation: Evidence From Taiwan and Catalonia." *Tourism Recreation Research* 47, no. 3 (July 13, 2021): 277–92.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/02508281.2021.1948718>.

Riera i Melis, Antoni, and Joan Santanach. *Catalan Gastronomic Heritage and Its Cuisine*. Barcelona: Biblioteca de Catalunya; Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Cultura, 2023. <http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12368/32450>.

Turisme de Barcelona. *Barcelona, Catalonia's Capital of Gastronomy*. n.d.
<https://www.barcelonaturisme.com/imgfiles/adg/dossierang.pdf>.

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Content

Topic 1 – Understanding Catalonia: History, Culture, and Culinary Identity

- Spain vs. Catalonia: a cultural and culinary overview
- The historical roots of Catalonia's unique identity
- Catalonia's geographical and historical positioning
- Catalonia's distinctive cultural markers (language, festivals and Traditional dishes)

Topic 2 – Essential Ingredients and Cooking Techniques

- The foundation of Catalan cuisine: core ingredients and cooking methods
- Traditional sauces and essential components of Catalan cooking
- *Mar i muntanya* (sea and mountain cuisine)

Topic 3 – The Gastronomic Calendar: Seasonality and Festive Cuisine

- The relationship between food, seasonality, and cultural celebrations
- Traditional festivals and their associated dishes (*Calçotada, Mona de Pasqua, Canelons de Nadal*)
- Rituals of communal dining and their significance in family and community life

Topic 4 – Food as Cultural Symbolism: Meaning Beyond Taste

- How food embodies regional pride and collective memory
- The Cultural Significance of key Catalan dishes
- The role of local markets in preserving food traditions (*La Boqueria, Santa Caterina Market*)
- The role of restaurants and food festivals in cultural activism

Topic 5 – Catalan Culinary Literature and the Preservation of Food Heritage

- The role of cookbooks and written culinary traditions in defining Catalan cuisine
- Key texts in Catalan gastronomy (*Corpus del Patrimoni Culinari Català*)
- Transmission of traditional recipes and the role of oral history in food preservation
- Culinary archives and the institutionalization of food heritage

Topic 6 – Culinary Heritage and the Evolution of Tradition

- The changing definition of culinary heritage
- The role of DOP (Denominació d'Origen Protegida) and IGP (Indicació Geogràfica Protegida) in food preservation
- The role of restaurants and chefs in redefining Catalan cuisine
- Modern interpretations of traditional cuisine in contemporary restaurants
- The future of Catalan culinary heritage

Topic 7 – Global Influences and Culinary Exchange in Catalonia

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- The historical and contemporary impact of global trade and migration on Catalan cuisine
- Influence of Latin American, North African, and Asian flavors in modern Catalan foodways
- Hybrid food cultures: adapting tradition to new influences

Topic 8 – Gastronomic Tourism in Catalonia: Tradition, Experience, and Economic Impact

- Introduction to gastronomic tourism
- Gastronomic tourism in Catalonia
- The economic and cultural impact of gastronomic tourism

Topic 9 – Sustainability and the Future of Catalan Cuisine

- The rise of the slow food and km 0 movements
- Organic farming and heritage crop preservation
- The role of restaurants and consumers in sustainable gastronomy

Field study and experiential learning components may include:

- On-site visits to relevant sites such as food shops, markets and food producers in and around Barcelona/Catalonia
- In-class and onsite tastings of Barcelona/Catalonia 's major products, with focus on their cultural significance, history, production and tasting techniques

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** Syllabus is subject to minor changes in term-specific syllabus at instructor discretion.*