COMM 405 “FROM THE GROUND UP” -- COMMUNICATING ABOUT FOOD

(20621R) FALL 2019

ANN 309: 11:00 am – 12:20 pm

**Instructor:** Dr. Colleen M. Keough

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**Office:** ASCJ 121B, **Telephone:** 213-740-3944

**Office Hours:**  2:00 – 3:00 Tuesday; 3:30 – 5:30 Wednesday, and by appointment other days.

**Course Overview**

Drawing heavily on academic research from the communication discipline, this course explores food communication in many contexts: from family meals to State dinners; from the growing fields for food production to the studios for food programming; and from issues of industrialized farm operations to personal gardens in LA parkways. Food is a facilitator/mediator of human interaction. Food is sustenance for living, as well as fodder for entertainment. Increasingly food is a means by which we create and manage our identities and assign identities to others.

* Food and Family
* Food Production and Communication Challenges
* Food and Public Diplomacy (Gastro Diplomacy)
* Food and Community
* Food and Entertainment

**Learning Objectives**

After completing this course you will be able to

* Discuss models of decision making for involving children in family food choices.
* Explain the origins of gastrodiplomacy and its role as a form of cultural diplomacy.
* Trace the evolution of food programming on various communication media.
* Examine how food controversies are increased or decreased due to communicative choices as to media, message, and advocates.
* Use academic research to create interview questions that are asked of subject matter experts in food production, promotion, etc.

**Class Structure**

The course will follow a seminar teaching style, emphasizing interactive discussion among all students. Several weeks have “Discussion Activities” that students need to prepare in advance.

**Assignments**

25% Exam 1 – October 3

25% Exam 2 – November 14

35% Communication Challenges of Urban Farming (Group Project with Paper and Presentation)

10% Discussion Activities

5% Class “Field” Activities – post information on Discussion Board

**Grading Scale**

Course final grades will be determined using the following scale

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| A 94-100  A- 90-93  B+ 87-89  B 84-86  B- 80-83  C+ 77-79 | C 74-76  C- 70-73  D+ 67-69  D 64-66  D- 60-63  F 59 and below |

All other assigned readings will be posted to Blackboard and should be completed prior to class on the day they are listed on the course calendar. Readings will be taken from the following sources:

**Administrative Information, Policies, and Procedures**

* The University of Southern California ***prohibits*** the awarding of points solely on a student’s physical presence in a class. However, they allow the use of unexcused absences and excessive tardiness to count against a grade. This includes leaving class early.***Unexcused absences will lower your final course grade.***Emailing me that you will not be in class does not mean it is an excused absence – that is just professional courtesy.

Arriving late or leaving early counts as 1/3 unexcused absence *per incident*. Your **final course grade** will be reduced beginning with the 3rd unexcused absence. The amount of the reduction is calculated on the total number of unexcused absences accrued during the semester. Students with 6 or more unexcused absences will receive an F.

* **Turn off cell phones/other mobile devices not being used for class activities.** Students who are instant messaging, web surfing, or involved in other similar activities during class will be marked **absent even if physically present in the classroom**.
* “Laptop Free” and “Laptop Allowed” zones will be designated in the classroom. As the names imply, if you want to use your laptop to take notes you must sit in the “Laptop Allowed Zone.” Unless announced by the instructor, you may only use the laptop for note taking.
* In order to make up an assignment (test or paper) without incurring a grade penalty, you must be able to document your absence (e.g., a doctor’s note). You must make up any missed assignments within one week of returning to school.
* Your participation in class activities will earn you points toward you final course grade. If you are not in class during these activities (even if you have an excused absence), you will receive no points – and these activities and points *cannot* be made up.
* Reading assignments and discussion posts are to be done prior to class. Chapters are given for each week and should be read before Tuesday’s class. Class discussion will affect grades.
* Failure to complete all assignments is grounds for course failure.
* You must pass at least one of the exams (60% or better) in order to pass the course.
* All assignments must be the original work of the student and cannot have been used or currently submitted for any other academic course.
* **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IS IMPORTANT!** The Annenberg School for Communication is committed to upholding the University’s Academic Integrity code as detailed in the Scampus guide. It is the policy of the School of Communication to report all violations of the code. Any serious violations or pattern of violations of the Academic Integrity Code will result in the student’s expulsion from the Communication major or minor.

**Communication Challenges of Urban Farming**

**Assignment Overview:**  In small groups (2-4 people) select an urban farm (NOT a garden) in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, or Ventura counties to visit.  Every member of the group **must** make the farm visit. Take a group photo at the farm to include in your paper.  The farm must be a commercial operation. You should create a set of questions to ask the farmer pertaining to the communication.  Because communication is a very broad discipline you will need to narrow your focus.  Example:  communication within the farm between employer/employees; communication with customers; public relations events; communication challenges; communication successes; etc., etc., etc.

**Preliminary Project proposal (5%, due 10/10) will provide the following information:**

* Annotated bibliography of 6-8 academic articles (not used for COMM 405 readings) to help you create questions and analyze your interview information.  At least half of the articles are from approved academic communication journals. (See list posted on Blackboard). These publications should be less than 5 years old. References must be in APA (6th ed.) format. Annotated bibliographies with references that are NOT in APA format will be returned ungraded. Resubmitted document will be considered late and incur a grade penalty. Resources for learning APA reference format are readily available through USC libraries, Purdue OWL and/or by reading the APA Reference manual.
* What farm are you visiting?
* With whom will you be speaking?
* What are 10 questions that you want to ask the farmer?

**Project Paper (20%): 12 - 15 pages (due Tuesday, 12/17/19 by 10:00 AM)**

**A formal, senior-level research and interview data paper. That demonstrates…….**

* Discuss the communication challenges faced by this farmer.
* Compare and contrast information from the academic literature discussed in your preliminary proposal and from your interviewee’s information.
* Paper should have appendix with photos showing your visit, and everyone in attendance.
* Use APA style to format your paper and references.  You do NOT need to include a title page or abstract.

**Informative Presentation (10%): 15 - 20 minutes (due weeks 14 - 15)**

All members of the group must participate in the presentation.  Do not try to “read” your paper to the class.  You need to convert “written” communication (your paper) in to “oral” communication (your presentation).  Visual aids are strongly advised.  Prior to your presentation, test out the projection/computer technology in the classroom to ensure that you will be able to show your visuals.

**Weekly Readings/Assignments**

**Week 1: Introduction**

8/27: Class introduction/student introductions

8/29: Stajcic, N. (2013). Understanding culture: Food as a means of communication.

Activity/Discussion Post: Food as Communication/Communicating About Food on USC campus

**Week 2: Family Dinners**

9/3: Fishel, A. K. (2016). Harnessing the power of family dinners to create change in family therapy. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy, 37,* 517-527.

[www.thefamilydinnerproject.org](http://www.thefamilydinnerproject.org)

Discussion Post: Three take-aways from the website

9/5: Ferdous, H. S., Ploderer, B., Davis, H., Vetere, F. & O’Hara, K. (2016). Commensality and the social use of technology during family mealtime. *ACM Transactions on Computer-Human Interaction, 23*(6), 37:1 – 37:26.

Discussion Post: To the extent possible, apply the research methodology from Ferdous et al "Commensality and the Social Use of Technology during Family Mealtime" to yourself.

List the technologies.

Are they Ready at Hand or Present at Hand?

Draw the spatial orientation of people and devices in the dining space.

**Week 3: Family Communication/Guest Speakers Dr. Peter Clarke and Dr. Susan Evans**

9/10

Kaplan, M., James, L., Alloway, F., & Kiernan, N. E. (2011). Youth empowerment in family conversations and decision making about food. In J. M. Cramer, C. P. Greene, C. P., & L. M. Walters, L. M. (Eds.) *Food as communication/Communication as food* (pp. 337-358). New York: Peter Lang.

9/12 Dr. Peter Clarke and Dr. Susan Evans Guest Speakers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BBmlMQ2QuEw>

Evans, S. & Clarke, P. (Winter, 2011). Disseminating orphan innovations. *Stanford Social Innovation Review.* 42-47.

Evans, S. & Clarke, P. (2019). Resolving design issues in developing a nutrition app: A case study using formative research. *Evaluation and Program Planning, 72,* 97-105.

Discussion Post: Write 3 questions that you would like to ask Drs. Clarke & Evans based upon the readings and youtube video. Submit via BB by 10:00 AM on 9/12.

**Week 4: Food Insecurity**

Discuss Group Research Paper – Communication Challenges of Urban Farming

9/17

Tsui, E. K. (2016). Pan de yucca and brown rice: The meaning of “good” food for cooks working in publicly funded foodservice. *Food, Culture & Society, 19*:2, 273-295

Ramadurai, V., Sharf, B. F., & Sharkey, J. R. (2012). Rural food insecurity in the United States as an overlooked site of struggle in health communication. *Health Communication, 27*:8, 794-805, DOI: 10.1080/10410235.2011.647620

**9/19 -** Ground Operations – Farming by Veterans

Website: http://groundoperations.net/

Video: Ground Operations

**Week 5: Food Production in Urban Environments.**

**9/24-26**

[**https://www.salon.com/2016/09/25/high-times-vertical-farming-is-on-the-rise-but-can-it-save-the-planet/?source=newsletter**](https://www.salon.com/2016/09/25/high-times-vertical-farming-is-on-the-rise-but-can-it-save-the-planet/?source=newsletter)

Seabrook, J. (2019). The age of robot farmers. The New Yorker.

**Week 6: midterm**

10/1 review

10/3 exam

**Weeks 7 - 8: Farmer Markets as a Site for Communication Research**

10/8

Eckstein, J. & Conley, D. (2012). Spatial affects and rhetorical relations: At the Cherry Creek Farmers’ Market. In J. J. Frye and M. S. Bruner (Eds.) *The rhetoric of food: Discourse, materiality, and power* (pp. 171-189)*.* New York: Routledge.

McCullen, C. (2011). The white farm imaginary: How one farmers market *re*fetishizes the production of food and limits food politics. In J. M. Cramer, C. P. Greene, C. P., & L. M. Walters, L. M. (Eds.) *Food as communication/Communication as food* (pp. 217-234). New York: Peter Lang.

10/10 – Group Work Day

10/15 – Annotated Bibliographies Due - Finish Farmers Market Readings

10/17 – No class Fall Recess

“Field Activity/Discussion Post” – visit a Farmers’ Market. USC hosts a Farmers’ Market on Wednesdays. Post by Thursday, 10/24.

**Week 9: Communicating Scientific Findings of Food Research**

10/22 - The Role Of The “Press Release” In Communicating Scientific Findings: The Case of Organic v. Conventionally Produced Foods.

Nikki Usher’s article <https://www.cjr.org/analysis/academic-study-journalism.php>

The “original” Stanford study:

Smith-Spangler C, Brandeau ML, Hunter GE, Bavinger JC, Pearson M, Eschbach PJ, et al. Are Organic Foods Safer or Healthier Than Conventional Alternatives?: A Systematic Review. Ann Intern Med. 2012;157:348-366. doi: 10.7326/0003-4819-157-5-201209040-00007

**Some Replies**

[**http://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2012/09/04/stanford-study-on-the-health-benefits-of-organic-food-what-people-are-saying/**](http://scopeblog.stanford.edu/2012/09/04/stanford-study-on-the-health-benefits-of-organic-food-what-people-are-saying/)

Stanford University PR/Media department report on the study: <https://med.stanford.edu/news/all-news/2012/09/little-evidence-of-health-benefits-from-organic-foods-study-finds.html>

10/24

Johnson, P. J. (Fall 2014/Winter 2015). Appetite for change. *USC Dornsife Magazine*. 33-37.

Walsh, B. (2014). Don’t blame fat*. Time, 183*(24), 28-35.

NPR story People Strongly Against GMOs Had Shakier Understanding Of Food Science, Study Finds January 26, 2019 <https://www.npr.org/sections/thesalt/2019/01/26/687852367/people-strongly-against-gmos-had-shakier-understanding-of-food-science-study-fin?utm_source=npr_newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_content=20190203&utm_campaign=&utm_term>=

Henderson, A., Weaver, C. K., Cheney, G. (2007). Talking ‘facts’: Identity and rationality in industry perspectives on genetic modification. *Discourse Studies 9*(1), 9 – 41. DOI: 10.1177/1461445607072105.

**Week 10 Slow Food Movement**

10/29-31

Stokes, A. Q. (2013). You are what you eat: Slow Food USA’s constitutive public relations.  *Journal of Public Relations, 25*, 68-90.

Garner, B. (2015). Conflicting messages: The visual rhetoric of slow food*. Communication Today, 6*(2), 112-119.

**Week 11: Gastrodiplomacy/Food TV**

11/5 Articles from Gastrodiplomacy issue of the Public Diplomacy Magazine. PDF of the magazine is on Blackboard.

Articles include

Paul Rockower, The state of gastrodiplomacy, pp. 11 – 15.

Yelena Osipova, From grastronationalism to gastrodiplomacy: Reversing the securitization of the dolma in the south Caucasus, pp. 16 – 20.

Johanna Mendelson Forman, Conflict cuisine: Teaching war through Washington’s ethnic restaurant scene, pp. 21 – 26.

Carly Schmitt, Cooking up a conversation: Gastrodiplomacy in contemporary public art, pp. 34 – 37.

Sam Chapple-Sokol, War and peas: Culinary conflict resolution as citizen diplomacy, pp 38 – 43.

On the 626 Taiwanese Night Market: An interview with founder Jonny Hwang, pp. 52 – 53.

Theodore C. Bestor, Most f(l)avored nation status: The gastrodiplomacy of Japan’s global promotion of cuisine, pp. 57 – 60.

Zoe Kosmidou, Gastrodiplomacy: The case of the embassy of Greece, pp. 61 – 65.

11/7 – Food TV Programming

Ketchum, C. (2005). The essence of cooking shows: How the Food Network constructs consumer fantasies. *Journal of Communication Inquiry, 29*(3), 217-234.

Oren, T. (2013). On the line: Format, cooking and competition as television values, *Critical Studies in Television, 8*(2), 20-35.

**Week 12: Food Television**

11/12- Food and Travel

Kelly, C. R. “Exoticizing Proverty in *Bizarre Foods America”* in The Political Language of Food.

Francesco Buscemi, Jamie Oliver and the gastrodiplomacy of simulacra, pp. 44 – 49 in Gastrodiplomacy issue of Public Diplomacy Magazine (Week 11).

11/14 Tailgating

Veri, J. J & Liberti, R. (2013). *Tailgate Warriors:* Exploring constructions of masculinity, food, and football. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 37*(3) 227-244.

**Week 13: Review and Exam 2**

11/19 Review for Exam 2

11/21 Exam 2

**Week 14:**

11/26 Group Presentations

11/28 University Holiday

**Week 15: Group Presentations**

12/3 Groups:

12/5 Groups:

**12/17 Communication Challenges of Urban Farming projects due by 10:00 AM (final examination period). Submit via Blackboard**

**Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems 2019 - 2020**

**Academic Conduct:**

Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” [policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b](https://policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b/). Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, [policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct](http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct).

**Support Systems:**

*Student Health Counseling Services - (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling/)

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

*National Suicide Prevention Lifeline - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call*

[suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org/)

Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

*Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call*

[engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp](https://engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp/)

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

*Office of Equity and Diversity (OED) | Title IX - (213) 740-5086*

[equity.usc.edu](https://equity.usc.edu/), [titleix.usc.edu](http://titleix.usc.edu)

Information about how to get help or help a survivor of harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants. The university prohibits discrimination or harassment based on the following protected characteristics: race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, physical disability, medical condition, mental disability, marital status, pregnancy, veteran status, genetic information, and any other characteristic which may be specified in applicable laws and governmental regulations.

*Bias Assessment Response and Support - (213) 740-2421*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/)

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions for appropriate investigation and response.

*The Office of Disability Services and Programs - (213) 740-0776*

[dsp.usc.edu](http://dsp.usc.edu/)

Support and accommodations for students with disabilities. Services include assistance in providing readers/notetakers/interpreters, special accommodations for test taking needs, assistance with architectural barriers, assistive technology, and support for individual needs.

*USC Support and Advocacy - (213) 821-4710*

[studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa](https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa/)

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

*Diversity at USC - (213) 740-2101*

[diversity.usc.edu](https://diversity.usc.edu/)

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

*USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu/), [emergency.usc.edu](http://emergency.usc.edu/)

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

*USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call*

[dps.usc.edu](http://dps.usc.edu/)

Non-emergency assistance or information.