

ANSC 114 Food & Culture in South Asia

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Office: SSB 273

Office Hours: 11-12:00 Tu/Th or by appt

Zoom: <https://ucsd.zoom.us/j/3043391783>

Class: Thur. 12:30-3:15pm

SSB269



In the *Food & Culture of South Asia* students will learn about a remarkably diverse world region. Each week in this class, we will encounter different kinds of food-related issues in this world area, such as the origin of Assamese tea, the religious significance of butter, and food riots at fast food outlets. As students of this course, you will use lectures, books, and your own imagination to witness the birth of agriculture in Pakistan and watch the distribution of temple *prasad* in India. You will sort through the spices of the subcontinent and debate the origins of rice, millet, and other foods. Overall, students will be focusing on the ways food, spices, and beverages shape identity, social relations, and cultural heritage. It will place food practices in the context of food security, sustainability, inequality, nutrition, family, and kinship.

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“Of all the foods and all the tastes in the world, fermented *Jharong* rice is the very best.”  
Màn Bahadur Raute

Good people like foods that are juicy, smooth, substantial, nutritious and these promote longevity, virtue, strength, health, happiness, and joy. Passionate people like foods that are bitter, sour, salty, hot, pungent, dry, burning and cause pain, grief, and disease. Ignorant people like food that are stale, tasteless, putrid, rotten and impure such as meat and alcohol.

- Bhagavad Gita 17.10

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Learning Outcomes

- Recognize the dimensions of physical geography, climate issues, and weather influences on agricultural regions of South Asia
- Become familiar with basic geopolitics, demographics, migrations, & communities in class readings
- Appreciate diversity of foods & cultures, their significance in class readings
- Become familiar with sustainable food & food security issues
- Become familiar with basic concepts surrounding food studies
- Master key ideas and conceptual frameworks in food studies
- Apply relevant concepts to topics discussed in class
- Appreciate the role of significant food plants and animals in regions under discussion

- Recognize food trade issues of significance in this world region
- Become familiar with regional food nutritional values and dietary issues such as malnutrition
- Write about and discuss concepts from readings and class discussions with a consideration of one's own situated knowledge.

Class Materials – Use UCSD [Canvas](#) to access readings and other materials

Readings are a set of **articles** in PDF form available on Canvas. See the Syllabus below for titles and due dates. Note the other recommended educational sources such as websites, blogs, youtube videos, library films, etc. For background about introductory anthropology, use of an introductory anthropology text is helpful. I use ones by [Conrad Kottak](#) or C. [Ember](#), but there are others available in the library and on-line.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING



Weekly Reading Review

Write a short summary of your weekly readings and include a couple of questions for class discussion. For example, in Week 2, write about the assigned readings for Week 2. These will be about 2 pages (~400-500 words) and are due 2 days before each weekly class (except for Week 1). Summarize the main points of the weekly assigned readings. Also include your own reflection about the readings and include a couple of questions that you have after reading the materials. This is where we have a chance to connect relevant topics in the news with our lectures & readings. I look forward to reading these, so try to come up with some interesting thoughts and ideas! Do not turn in an outline, bullet point, or notational format. 20 pts each

Active Learning

There will be occasional group discussions, food lessons, and other active learning projects. During these days, you will participate in various activities such as cooking, mapping, creating a cross-word puzzle of key ideas, doing a worksheet, etc. 20 pts each

Powerpoint Lecture - Students will present a PPT lecture of about 10 minutes during the last few weeks of class. Topics will focus on issues pertaining to a weekly subject. We will assign PPT topics in Week 6. See the grading rubric in the Student PPT folder for more details. Also, we will have about 10 minutes of follow-up discussion after student PPT presentations. Use active listening skills when others are giving presentations. Develop one question to ask of other students after their presentations. 50 pts.

Attendance & Participation. Be prepared to attend sessions in person when UCSD

allows on-campus classes. You are expected to be on time for class, complete your readings before class, & prepare with questions and comments for discussion. Class participation is

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encouraged and considered in your performance. Class participation may involve sharing highlights from your WQs during class, doing an activity in class, or reflecting on films and media in group discussions. This includes offering ideas, talking with fellow students, asking thoughtful questions, etc. Students who miss class or assignments for the purpose of quarantine, religious observance, job interview, illness, or an unexpected problem are permitted to make up course work. For anyone missing lectures, you can submit a 1-2 page summary from the posted zoom class lecture if it's an excused absence. Please email me through Canvas about your situation ahead of time or in a timely manner. 20pts/meeting session. 20 pts each.

Final Using your PPT talk, write a blog essay. Upload the images and written content to a new page under the ' Blogging ' section. Details to be discussed in Class. 50 pts. Final assignment is due by Monday, Mar 14th, midnight. See Assignment folder for details. 50 pts.

Grading in General: Evaluation of your materials is based on the *depth, breadth, clarity, examples, and creativity* of your work. Evaluations are based on the distribution of the sum of your grades, these being your weekly essay papers (20 pts each); active learning (20pts each); PPT lecture (50 pts); Final (50 pts) & attendance & participation in class (20pts each).

Extra Credit You will need to ask me for extra credit & it will be offered under the Assignments tab. You may do one if you missed an WQ or other assignment. Using an assigned YouTube video for guidance, you can make a banana leaf plate, for example.

Google site We have a Google webpage site to share or store video or audio clips, PDF articles, writing drafts etc. Details will be discussed in class. For editing, use:

https://sites.google.com/d/1gO8k8PhjBctF9fO8ppWnoXYTREM_cWU1/p/1EdufcUZ9T_H_Nn49iPxrVUjQvmBWck1ED/edit?authuser=4

For viewing only, use: <https://sites.google.com/view/southasiafoodculture/home>

Evaluation Policy: For D.S.P.S. students, reasonable accommodations will be made. It is the responsibility of the student to present their situation to the instructor during the first Session of the session so that a learning support plan of action can be put in place. Student rights, responsibilities and administrative due process is also enumerated in campus policies. Students agree that by taking this course required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. Such submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of the Turnitin.com service is subject to the terms of use agreement posted on the Turnitin.com site.

Video: When watching films through the UCSD library, first turn on your computer device's VPN (Virtual Private Network) connection to UCSD if you're off campus. Details are available at <https://library.ucsd.edu/computing-and-technology/connect-from-off-campus/>. Type in

the name of the film/video or click on the video name in this syllabus if we're watching a UC Library film. If you lose your VPN connection or the film stops, you can often "Reload" (Command+R) and this gives the video more time to download so you can pick up where you left off.

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Summary of Canvas Organization PDF articles are in **Files**; Past Zoom Lectures are in **Media Gallery**; Weekly Written Question and Final Paper are in **Assignments**; Discussions and group talks are in **Discussions**. **Attendance** will be entered by me in the gradesheet. The **Pages** folder contains optional material.

Summary of Grading 20pts for each Attendance/Participation; 20pts for each Weekly Reading Review; 20pts for each Active Learning; 50pts PPT; 50 pts Final assignment.

A/A- = 91-100%; B+/B/B- = 81-90%; C+/C/C- = 71-80%; D+/D/D- = 61-70%

SYLLABUS

Please read your assigned materials for a total of about 3-4 hours each week. If you can't read every article within this time frame, please skim the article's highlights until you get a good idea of the main points from the article abstract, section headings, first sentences of paragraphs, and conclusion. In addition, set aside some time to look at the media for each week. You can optionally include the media materials in your written Reading Reviews.

Week 1 Jan 6 Overview of South Asia's Geography & Foods

Readings:

Sen, Colleen Taylor. *Food Culture in India*. Chapter 1.

Srinivas, Tulasi. 2021. "Swiggy it!": Food Delivery, Gastro Geographies, and the Shifting Meaning of the Local in Pandemic India" *Gastronomica* vol.21, no.4, pp.17–30.

Media:

Watch a Video: [Our Choices Matter](#) and/or [The Wounded Souls of Rann](#)

Explore a website: Ishita Unblogged: [Celebrating Pongal \(millet porridge\) with Sakkarai Pongal](#)

Week 2 Jan 13 Food Security in the Region

Readings:

Sachs, Jeffrey and Ban Ki-Moon. Chapter 10 'Food Security'. [The Age of Sustainable Development](#). Columbia Univ Press

Panter-Brick, Catherine, and Mark Eggerman. "Household responses to food shortages in western Nepal." *Human Organization* (1997): 190-198.

Taheri, Fatemeh, Hossein Azadi, and Marijke D'Haese. "A world without hunger: organic or GM crops?." *Sustainability* 9, no. 4 (2017): 580.

Media:

UCSD Library Video (log-in first): [Fishing: In the Sea of Greed](#) and/or a video about Lepcha farmers in Sikkim, [Our Seeds, Central to Food, Life, and Culture](#)

Explore a website: [Sustainable Development Goals](#); [Global Food Security Index](#); [Afghanistan's Farmers, Herders desperate](#); [Action Against Hunger](#)

Week 3 Jan 20 Food Diversity in the Subcontinent

Readings:

Mintz & Schlettwein-Gsell 2002. "Food Patterns in Agrarian Societies: The Core-Fringe Legume Hypothesis". *Gastronomica* 1.3 (2001): 40-52

Fortier, Jana 2009 *Kings of the Forest* Univ. of Hawaii Press, Chapter 5 **Kanjilal**, Sucharita. "Beyond Bourdieu: What Tomatoes in Indian Recipes Tell Us about "Taste"."

Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture 21, no. 3 (2021): 1-12. **Appadurai**, Arjun 1988. "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India."

Comparative Studies in Society and History. 30: 3-24

Sen, Colleen Taylor. *Food Culture in India*. Chapter 2

Media:

Watch a Video: Excerpt from [Jungle Nomads of the Himalayas](#) and/or Village Food Kitchen by Lajim Budha [Episode 9: The Last Nomad of Nepal](#)

Explore a website: [Darjeeling Aloo: Exploring a quintessential evening snack in](#)

the hills and/or Archaeological Ruins at Moenjodaro

Week 4 Jan 27 Food Purity & Impurity

Readings:

Ferro-Luzzi, Gabriella Eichinger. "Food Avoidances of Indian Tribes." *Food, Ecology and Culture: Readings in the Anthropology of Dietary Practices*. Gordon and Breach. **pp. 385-406 only.**

Roncaglia, S. "Bombay-Mumbai and the Dabbawalas: Origin and Development of a Parallel Economy" in *Feeding the City: Work and Food Culture of the Mumbai Dabbawalas*. **Ch 1.**

Srinivas, Tulasi. "As Mother Made It': The Cosmopolitan Indian Family, 'Authentic' food And The Construction Of Cultural Utopia." **pp.191-197 only.**

Doniger, W. "Varuna's Son Goes to Hell" and "Rebirth, Nonviolence, And Vegetarianism"; in *The Hindus*.

Media:

Watch a Video: Excerpt from [The Lunchbox](#) and/or [A World of Food: Tastes & Taboos in Difference Cultures](#) and

Explore a website: [Mrs. Balbir Singh: Indian Cookery](#)

Week 5 Feb 3 Food, Cooking, & Identity

Readings:

Jhala, Angma. 2012. "Cosmopolitan Kitchens: Cooking For Princely Zenanas In Late Colonial India." In *Curried Cultures: Globalization, Food, and South Asia*: 49-72.

Appadurai, Arjun. "Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia." *American ethnologist* 8.3 (1981): 494-511.

Mahadevan, Meena, Dorothy Blair, and Emily Rose Raines. "Changing Food Habits in a South Indian Hindu Brahmin community: A Case of transitioning gender roles and family dynamics." *Ecology of food and nutrition* 53.6 (2014): 596-617.

Sen, Colleen Taylor. *Food Culture in India*. Chapter 3

Kannan, Smruthi Bala. "Making Rasam by the Eye during Uncertain Times." *Gastronomica* 20, no. 3 (2020): 41-42.

Media:

Online Video: [Oshi Palav, a traditional meal and its social and cultural contexts in Tajikistan](#)

Explore a website: [DeccanTiffin](#)

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Week 6 Feb 10 Food in Public: Eating Out, Cooking Shows, & Public Culture

Readings:

Ray, Krishnendu. "Rethinking Street Vending." *Gastronomica* 20, no. 1 (2020): 1-15. **Simi**,

Demi, and Jonathan Matusitz. "Glocalization of subway in India: How a US giant has adapted in the Asian subcontinent." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 52.5 (2017): 573-585.

Dolphijn, Rick. 2006. "Capitalism on a Plate: The Politics of Meat Eating in Bangalore." *Gastronomica*.

Sen, Colleen Taylor. *Food Culture in India*. Chapter 5

Media:

Watch a Video: [Exotic Indian Street Food Tour in Mumbai, India](#) and/or [Mug cake recipe in cooker | eggless chocolate mug cake in pressure cooker](#)

Explore a website: [Mint Lounge's Food section](#)

Week 7 Feb 17 Sustainable Agriculture in South Asia

Readings:

Ali, Abu Muhammad Shajaat. 2005. "Homegardens in Smallholder Farming Systems: examples from Bangladesh." *Human Ecology* 33.2: 245-270.

Ramesh, P., et al. 2010. "Status of Organic Farming in India." *Current Science* 98.9: 1190- 1194.

Muenster, Daniel. 2018. "Performing alternative agriculture: critique and recuperation in Zero Budget Natural Farming, South India."

Media:

Watch a Video: [Hunza People in Chipursan valley, Pakistan](#)

Explore a website: [Almost Heaven Farms](#) or [The Kamala Foundation: Regenerative Development in Nepal](#)

Week 8 Feb 24 Native Foods: Resilient Cultivars

Readings:

Fuller, Dorian Q., et al. "Across the Indian Ocean: The prehistoric movement of plants and animals." *Antiquity* 85.328 (2011): 544-558.

Dixit, Anjali A., et al. 2011. "Incorporation of whole, ancient grains into a modern Asian Indian diet to reduce the burden of chronic disease." *Nutrition reviews* 69: 479-488. **Sen**, Selina. 2018. [Note: use URL below, not in Canvas PDF folder]. "Urban Gardening: As Indian cities grow congested, the only space left for gardens is up – on rooftops", *Scroll.in* at <https://scroll.in/magazine/890669/as-indian-cities-grow-congested-the-only-space-left-for-gardens-is-up-on-rooftops>

Deb, Debal. "Rice Cultures of Bengal." *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture* 21, no. 3 (2021): 91-101.

Media:

Watch a Video: [Nar Bayrami: Traditional pomegranate festivity & culture](#)

Explore a website: [UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage](#)

*This information comes from Azerbaijan, a southern Asian country

Explore a website: [Asian Food Fest](#)

Week 9 Mar 3 The South Asian Food Trade

*No Reading Reviews this week

Readings:

Kraig, Bruce, and Colleen Taylor Sen. "Commonalities and Convergences in World Street Market Food." in *Food & Markets: Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery*. Prospect Books, 2015.

Besky, Sarah. "Colonial Pasts and Fair Trade Futures: Changing Modes Of Production And Regulation On Darjeeling Tea Plantations." in *Fair Trade And Social Justice: Global Ethnographies* (2010): 97-122.

Optional: **Sen**, Arijit (2016) "Food, Place, And Memory: Bangladeshi fish stores on Devon Avenue, Chicago" *Food and Foodways*, 24: 67-88

Media:

Watch a Video: Amazon Prime Video: [Masala Chai](#) (preferred) Or YouTube Video: [Tea in the Land of Thunder](#)

Explore a website: [RosieLovesTea](#)

PPTs - *Presenters please provide me a link to an article on your PPT topic. I will share it with your classmates to review before your presentation.

Week 10 Mar 10 Promoting Healthy Foods in Medicine & Health

*No Reading Reviews this week

PPTs - Presenters please provide me a link to an article on your PPT topic. I will share it with your classmates to review before your presentation.

Readings:

Sarkar, Preetam, et al. "Traditional and Ayurvedic Foods of Indian origin." *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 2.3 (2015): 97-109.

Optional: **Tamang**, Jyoti Prakash. *Himalayan fermented foods: microbiology, nutrition, and ethnic values*. CRC Press, 2009. pp. 1-31.

Media:

Watch a Video: [Conversations with the Veddha](#)

Explore a website: [The Ayurvedic Chef](#) or The [Eat Foundation](#)

Final Assignment Mon. Mar. 14

