

Ecogastronomy ES347

(Fall 2025; CRN 11589; 1.5 units)

Instructor: Dr. John P. Volpe jpv@uvic.ca TA: Name

Office Hours:

JPV: by appointment via email; in person (Turpin B-156) or via Zoom anytime

TA: by appointment via email; in person or via Zoom anytime

Lecture: Tuesdays & Thursdays 4:30-5:50pm Mac D207

Contact Hours: 3-0-0 Prerequisite: ES200 BrightSpace link: <https://bright.uvic.ca/d2l/home/422644>

Course Description

Students will develop a broad understanding of the reciprocal relationships linking ecology and evolution (with support from history and anthropology) to gastronomy. Focus will be how these processes shape contemporary foodways and food production systems, consumption and responses to organoleptic properties of foods.

Teaching Objectives

Understanding of the basic functional biology and chemistry of foods and their roles in human/food evolutionary history. Appreciate the intersection of human/primate evolution and modern food consumption patterns
To be able to articulate how “place identity” is foundational to both product quality and sustainability with working knowledge of the major challenges that threaten these characters.

Course Materials

There is no text for the course. Lecture slides, readings, videos etc. will all be available via the course BrightSpace page. Additional readings / viewings may be added up to a week prior to class.

Course Methodology

Lectures are exclusively face-to-face and will not be recorded. Additional required readings and viewings are made available via the course BrightSpace page.

Evaluation

Sensory analysis participation 5% (in person)

For full marks you will participate in two independent sensory evaluations. Each evaluation will require ~15 min and will be made available throughout the first ~four weeks of class. The Sensory Lab is in Turpin B-161. Days/Times TBA.

Midterm Exam 25% (online)

Multiple choice, matching, short answer Via BrightSpace. All lectures, readings and viewings may be covered. Timed. Open book. Emphasis on information recall 4:30-5:50 pm Oct 23.

Final Exam 40% (cumulative, in person during exam period)

Long and short written answers. Emphasis in information synthesis. Exam will be during the final exam period. Scheduling is by the Registrar. Do not make commitments (job, travel etc.) until after the final exam date is known. Alternative dates for writing this exam cannot be approved.

Gastronomy Journal Article 30% (electronic submission Dec 1 to BrightSpace dropbox)

See information below and on BrightSpace page.

Lecture Schedule

Readings, videos, and support materials associated with each lecture are on the Brightspace page. All materials are testable. Lecture order & content subject to change and will be reflected on the course Brightspace page.

Class introduction
What is Ecogastronomy?
Soil Ecology in agriculture (Brooke Hayes)
The ecology of nutrients from the ground up
What is “food”?
Taste
Hunting for flavour
Aromas
Gastro-cultural evolution
Domestication and the rise of agriculture
Blue Revolution
Food devolution
Midterm Exam (Oct 23)
Ecological hoofprint of meat
Appellations, geographic indications and “terroir”
“Fake” foods and the authenticity crisis
Food at the microbial level
No Class – Reading Break
Food & liberalism
Culinary evolution, innovation & extinction
Final Exam review

Gastronomy Magazine Article (perhaps change to “the evolution of a dish” focus rather than a 1 recipe)

30% final grade due Dec 1. Late penalty is 15% per 24-hour period, no exceptions.

Each student will contribute to the class Gastronomic Magazine. The “magazine” will be compiled from the contributions from each student. The main body of your magazine article will be 2000 words in length (recipe, figure/table captions, footnotes, references and an optional title page are not included in the word count). Your article will be formatted as per your own design and submitted as a pdf file to the BrightSpace dropbox.

Everyone’s article will be compiled into a single volume distributed to the class (and perhaps further) and as such, you may choose not to include your name in the article if you wish (the Brightspace dropbox identifies the submission by name, for purposes of assigning a mark).

The objective of this exercise is to create an in-depth, critical but engaging examination of a favourite dish / recipe. As examined in class, there are many dimensions to a dish; historical, cultural, ecological, economic etc. In this exercise you will choose a specific dish to highlight (where relevant):

- the geographic origin of the two main ingredients
- significant evolutionary transition of ingredients via artificial (or natural) selection
- how the bio-geo-physical attributes in its place of origin have contributed to shape the dish
- how cultural practices in its place of origin shape the dish
- variants or adaptations of the dish reflecting other places and/or cultures
- the temporal evolution of the dish (has the dish evolved since inception? why?)
- your recipe

Your choice of dish need not be geographically or culturally iconic. For instance, “macaroni and cheese” is widely considered a global generic dish. However, there are many place-based specialty variations of this dish which has its roots in the mid 1700s French cuisine. Enriching béchamel (one of the five ‘mother sauces’) with cheese makes a Mornay sauce (in honour of the Duke of Mornay from the late 1500s). The type of cheese can take you in many different directions to say nothing of the pasta which has competing origin stories involving Marco Polo or the Etruscans (pre-Roman civilization of the Italian peninsula). Suffice to say that even something as seemingly simple as ‘mac & cheese’ is rich in potential.

The main ingredient(s) for your chosen dish must be i) the product of agriculture (not wild forage) which have been ii) significantly transformed via human activity (cooking, fermenting, preserving etc.).

You have complete creative and editorial control of your article (reflecting 1/3 of the mark value). The article will be in print (pdf) form therefore do not include video, gifs, audio etc.

Grading

Content - 20 marks

General Content: Clearly and effectively examines the themes outlined above (among others) written for a knowledgeable but lay audience.

Research: Article is deeply researched referencing primary sources (where appropriate) and other competent sources. Course work and general literature are used to support statements of fact. Includes at least one figure and one map.

Academic Content: The article is informative. It covers the required criteria through integrating historical, natural, geo-physical, economic, and cultural sources into a single, engaging narrative (as opposed to bullet points in sentence form).

Editorial - 10 marks

The narrative is logical, well-written and supports audience engagement. The article has an effective “hook” near the beginning compelling the reader to engage the article in full, rather than skipping to the recipe. In other words, the reason the article is being written needs to be clear – as is the case for any magazine article. The profit incentive for the reader needs to be up front and explicit (and not manufactured).

Technical: The article utilizes graphic design and layout to engage the reader and enhance the material. Simple text with embedded pictures will not score highly. Effective and creative use of graphic design is expected.

Creativity: The article strives to be unique, original, and creative. It catches the viewer's attention and holds their interest.

Organization: Information is organized and flows in a coherent narrative arc.

Submit via the course Brightspace page by **5pm Dec 1** (No extensions. 15% off per 24-hours or part thereof)

General Guidance for your article

This is a term project for a 3rd year course, and will be marked accordingly. Modest word count ≠ superficial.

Layout

- You are permitted one non-original image. All other images, figures and graphical elements must be created by you. You can create by hand or electronically. All images, save one, must be your own.
- All pages are to be the same dimension
- As with any magazine article, “dead space” should be minimized
- If you wish, you may include a title page (as a magazine article might), however, it must be a title page, with no or minimal text beyond the article’s title.

- Do not include page numbers.
- You will have the entire three-month semester to produce this document – it should look the part.

Recipe

- Your recipe should be yours, not cut & pasted from another source. If inspired from a source, cite it. Alternate suggestions should accompany hard to source ingredients.
- Recipe should occupy a “pop-out” section and consume the equivalent of half page at most. Look at magazines and blogs for inspiration.
- 33% of the mark reflects layout, graphic design and creating an engaging visual document. Make use of tools readily available (Canva among many others) to add visual value to your work and drive reader engagement.

Citations and References

- In-text citations should be numbered superscript (e.g., citable fact¹) with the reference section numbered accordingly
- Use 9-point font for your references section
- Genus and species name should be italicized with the genus name capitalized (e.g., *Homo sapiens*). This is convention across all disciplines, science based or not.

General Class Notes

GenAI not allowed

Please be advised that in this course you are not authorized to use any form of generative AI. Students should not make any use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT, Grammarly, among others that use AI for content generation and editing. As per the University of Victoria Academic Integrity Policy “*Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.*” The only permissible use of AI in this course is as a graphic design aid in your Gastronomy Magazine Article, however, no content of your article can be a product of generative AI.

Grading

The table below is the official UVic grading system used by instructors in arriving at final assessments of student performance.

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage*	Description
A+	9	90- 100	An A+, A, or A- is earned by work which is technically superior, shows mastery of the subject matter, and in the case of an A+ offers original insight and/or goes beyond course expectations. Normally achieved by a minority of students.
A	8	85- 89	
A-	7	80- 84	
B+	6	77- 79	A B+, B, or B- is earned by work that indicates a good comprehension of the course material, a good command of the skills needed to work with the course material, and the student’s full engagement with the course requirements and activities. A B+ represents a more complex understanding and/or application of the course material.
B	5	73- 76	
B-	4	70- 72	
C+	3	65- 69	A C+ or C is earned by work that indicates an adequate comprehension of the course material and the skills needed to work with the course material and that indicates the student has met the basic requirements for completing assigned work and/or participating in class activities.
C	2	60- 64	

Grade	Grade Point Value	Percentage*	Description
D	1	50- 59	A D is earned by work that indicates minimal command of the course materials and/or minimal participation in class activities that is worthy of course credit toward the degree.
COM	N/A	N/A	Complete (pass). Used only for 0-unit courses and those credit courses designated by the Senate. Such courses are identified in the course listings.
CTN	Excluded Grade	N/A	Continuing. Denotes the first half of a full-year course.
F	0	0- 49	F is earned by work, which after the completion of course requirements, is inadequate and unworthy of course credit towards the degree.
N	0	0- 49	Did not write examination or complete course requirements by the end of term or session; no supplemental. This grade may only be assigned by the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations.
DEF	N/A	N/A	Deferred status granted. Used only when deferred status has been granted because of illness, an accident or family affliction. See Deferred Status . This grade may only be assigned by the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations.
WE	N/A	N/A	Withdrawal under extenuating circumstances. The WE registration status will replace a course registration or grade when approved by the Dean following a request for academic concession from a student. This registration status is excluded from the calculation of all grade point averages; it will appear on the official transcript. This grade may only be assigned by the Associate Dean, Academic and Student Relations.

Children in Class

Babies and young children are welcome in lecture classes (but not the Sensory Lab). Please sit close to the door if you bring your child to class so that you may step outside to meet their needs. Non-parents in the class, please offer seats near the door for parenting classmates.

Sexualized Violence

To learn more about how the University defines sexualized violence and its overall approach visit www.uvic.ca/svp. If you or someone you know has been affected by sexualized violence and needs information, advice, and/or support please contact the sexualized violence resource office in Equity and Human Rights (EQHR). Whether or not you have been directly affected, if you want to take part in the important prevention work taking place on campus, you can also reach out:

Where: Sexualized violence resource office in EQHR; Sedgewick C119

Phone: 250.721.8021 | Email: svpcoordinator@uvic.ca | Web: www.uvic.ca/svp

Attendance and Absences Due To Illness

If you are unable to attend a class my expectation is that you will review assigned class materials, obtain class notes from another student and follow up with me if you have any questions about the materials. Students who are ill are expected to stay home and not attend class. There is only one lecture period where marks will be awarded, and attendance is mandatory (Label Quiz). Lab quizzes are hands-on and if missed, cannot be made up afterwards. Notes are not required for missed classes/labs.

Class Recordings

For various pedagogical, privacy, security and ethics reasons please notify the instructor if you intend on recording in class.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit individual or group work. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research, and service. Therefore, plagiarism and other acts against academic integrity are serious academic offences. Depending on the severity of the case, penalties include a warning, a failing grade, a record on the student's transcript, or a suspension.

Faculty and University Regulations and Policies

Students should review all regulations and policies contained in the [University of Victoria Calendar](#). Students must comply with all applicable university and Faculty policies and regulations. In particular, please note the following important regulations and policies:

- [Accessibility](#)
- [Accommodation of Religious Observance](#)
- [Discrimination and Harassment Policy](#)
- [Diversity / EDI](#)
- [Equity statement](#)
- [General University Policies](#)
- [Non-academic Student Misconduct](#)
- [Sexualized Violence Prevention and Support](#)
- [Student Conduct](#)
- [University Calendar](#) and section on "[Information for all students](#)"

Resources and Supports

There are a variety of resources that are available to students that can support your academic success and wellness.

- [Centre for Academic Communication](#)
- [Indigenous Academic & Community Engagement \(Student Resources\)](#)
- [Indigenous student services](#)
- [Student Wellness](#)
- [Support Connect for 24/7 support](#)
- Office of Student Life resources for [Student Conduct](#) and [Non-Academic Misconduct](#)
- [Ombudsperson](#)
- [UVic Campus & Community Resource List](#)
- [UVic Learn Anywhere](#), the primary learning resource for students that offers many learning workshops and resources to help students with academics and learning strategies.
- [UVic Libraries](#)