MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY

INSTRUCTOR:

Vanessa Domine, Ph.D. | Professor | School of Communication and Media
Office: Morehead Hall 125 | Voicemail (973) 655-6850 | Email: vanessa.domine@montclair.edu
Skype handle: vanessadomine | Twitter: @FoodMediaLit
Office Hours: Wednesdays 10:00-11:00am, Fridays 9:00-10:00am & by appointment

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

Communication and Media Arts Activity 1-3 Credits Prerequisite(s): CMDA 320. Supervised communication and media arts activity focused on specific topics of relevance. May be repeated without limit.

COURSE SECTION DESCRIPTION:

This course is both a theoretical and empirical exploration of food through the lens of media literacy. Food is itself a medium for issues including (but not limited to) education, economics, environmental sustainability, social justice, and human communication. Food media literacy as a subfield of media literacy has traditionally focused on an active, critical analysis of food marketing messages. However, this course extends the definition of food media literacy to encompass *both* the critical habits of mind *and* creative skills of expression requisite for active civic engagement. Students will develop and apply food media literacy skills to analyze, evaluate, create, and circulate knowledge about the histories, cultures, economies, and politics of food in the United States, as they resonate on a global scale. We will examine how people (individually and collectively) negotiate the meanings of food "texts" and how those meanings are mediated through oral, print, electronic, and digital communications. Students will demonstrate understanding of the languages, messages, audiences, and ownership of food through individualized and cross-platform media productions.

COURSE CONTENT & SCOPE:

The center of gravity this semester is media literacy—a constellation of life skills that are necessary for full participation in our media-saturated, information-rich society.[1] These skills include the ability to:

- **Access** information by locating and sharing materials and comprehending information and ideas
- **Analyze** messages in a variety of forms by identifying the author, purpose and point of view, and **evaluate** the quality and credibility of the content.
- **Create content** in a variety of forms, making use of language, images, sound, and new digital tools and technologies
- **Reflect** on one's own conduct and communication by applying social responsibility and ethical principles
- **Take social action** by working individually and collaboratively to share knowledge and solve problems in the family, workplace and community, and by participating as a member of the community.[2]

Media literacy promotes an individual's capacity to simultaneously empower and protect oneself and their community. In this way, information needs are both personal and civic.[3] There is also a tendency in Academia to

---

[1] Hobbs, R. (2010). *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action*. Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute.

[2] See Hobbs, p. vii-viii.

[3] Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy. (2009). *Informing communities: Sustaining democracy in the digital age.* Washington, D.C.: The Aspen Institute.

limit our activity to simply being critical at the expense of creativity. This severely limits our thinking and blinds us to our own assumptions. Therefore, in this *upper-division university-level course*, you are required to both think critically *and* act creatively. Meaning, it requires you to *do* **media literacy**: Engage in *all* aspects of the media literacy cycle listed above (e.g., access, analyze, evaluate, create, reflect, and act) using as your intellectual (and in some cases, physical) playground the mediated world of food. Ideally, this course will provide you with a robust media literacy experience to magnify your particular program of study in the School of Communication and Media.

REQUIRED TEXTS & TECHNOLOGIES:

- **Course Reader** (Available through Canvas, as needed)

- **Access to Streaming/On-Demand Video Service** (i.e., NetFlix, Amazon Prime, etc.)
  As part of this course, you will be asked to view various genres of food-related programming. Where possible, I will do my best to arrange for free access and/or in-class screenings of such programs. However, in some cases you will need to make arrangements to legally and lawfully rent, buy, or stream content. If you do not have access to cable TV service, then a monthly subscription to NetFlix will suffice.

- **Laptop or smart device:** This class is BYOD (bring your own device). It's essential that you have access to a web-enabled device *at the beginning of every class*, so that you can take the weekly quizzes. Sharing devices is prohibited during quizzes and exams, but allowed for all other in-class activities. Note that the Office of Information Technology offers laptop lending through the Sprague Library in case you need it. *There are NO paper-based assignments in this course.*

- **A working knowledge of popular social media tools (e.g., GoogleApps, TimeGlider, Padlet)**.
  While I will provide basic instruction and tutorials for these free web-based tools, it is your responsibility to acquire a basic working knowledge of these, as they are required for assignments on which your final course grade is based. A basic knowledge includes embedding text, images and video within and across these programs. Be pro-active about learning them.

METHODS OF ACHIEVING COURSE GOALS:

This 3-credit upper division course in the School of Communication and Media offers a progression of assignments that build upon each other to lead to a transformed understanding about media literacy through the cultural lens of food. To establish common intellectual ground, you are asked to read about, respond to, and critically analyze essays, research, film, and television programming through various cultural lenses that will be introduced to you in the assigned readings, in-class discussions, guest speakers, and film screenings. In the process, you will be asked to engage with a wide array of media texts and forms. Anticipate completing **roughly 3-6 hours of work *beyond* your weekly class attendance.** The following assignments comprise your final course grade at the end of the semester:

- o **QUIZZES** You will be quizzed on the content of the assigned readings and your basic comprehension of that content. Quizzes cover exclusively the content from the assigned readings. The sole purpose of each quiz is to ensure that you complete the reading prior to coming to class— and *not* to assess your mastery or application of content. There will be a total of 10 quizzes during the semester @ 5 points each (50 points total). *There are no make-up quizzes. Therefore, if you are tardy to or absent from class then you earn a zero score.*

- o **FOOD AUTOBIOGRAPHY** You will reflect upon and write about a prominent personal memory surrounding a particular food, with an emphasis on its socio-cultural meaning (700-750 words). (75 points total)

- o **HISTORICAL TIMELINE** This multimedia project asks you (as researcher/curator/multimedia designer) to engage with the history of a particular food or recipe and map it across time, geographies, and cultures. You will submit a link to your timeline and a 1-page rationale for your timeline through Canvas (75 points)

- o **COOKBOOK ANALYSIS** This analytical essay focuses on the key questions central to food media literacy (as discussed in class). You will apply the key questions to a cookbook of your choice (approved by the instructor) to more deeply understand how the author constructs and conveys ideas about culture, politics, history, etc. (1250 words in length) (100 points total)

- o **VIEWER RESPONSES** Each film or program screening will require you to digitally document (in writing) your observations, ask questions, and make connections across concepts. A template will be provided and you will submit your responses through Canvas. (50 points total)

- o **FOOD MEDIA LITERACY PROJECT** This final project will be based on a course topic of your choice that will be approved by the instructor for submission at the end of the semester. The project development will be progressive (involve multiple stages) and will require you to implement all phases of the media literacy cycle. You will demonstrate your learning through a written essay and a multimedia web-based presentation. The semester culminates in an oral presentation/demonstration of your final project during the final exam class period. *Note: There is no final examination in this course, just your submission of this final project.* (150 points)

ASSIGNMENTS-AT-A-GLANCE:

Assignment	Point Value	Final Grade %
In-Class Quizzes (10 @ 5 points)	50 points	10%
Food Autobiography	75 points	15%
Historical Timeline	75 points	15%
Cookbook Analysis	100 points	20%
Viewer Responses	50 points	10%
Food Media Literacy Project	150 points	30%
Total:	**500 points**	**100%**

PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS:

- **Reliable Internet access is required to fully participate in this course.** Being "offline" is not a legitimate excuse for missing class, not completing the reading or viewing of assigned material, or missing a submission deadline. Anticipate snafus and plan for the unexpected.

- **Use standard academic email etiquette.** Whenever possible, communicate to me through the Canvas course interface. On rare occasions when you must communicate outside of Canvas, use your university email account, if possible. In extreme circumstances, if you email me using a non-university email address, you *must* put [CMST 435] in your subject header if you want me to read (rather than delete) your message. Make sure to include your first and last name in the message body. You can find additional rules of email etiquette at http://tinyurl.com/CMDAtips.

- **Limit your in-class use of digital tools to course-related tasks**. It is acceptable and even encouraged to use laptops, tablet devices, and/or smart phones for use within the classroom for note taking. However, know your strengths as well as your limitations. *The research on multi-tasking reveals that by simultaneously engaging in multiple activities, we do none of them well.*[4] As is true in the professional world as well as

---

[4] As MIT neuroscientist Earl Miller explained in an interview with NPR, most people are actually quickly shifting their attention from one task to another when they think they are doing two or three or eight things at once. That constant change of focus makes our brain less functional, not more. Learn more at http://www.digitalresponsibility.org/perils-of-multitasking

socially, you will be more successful and your experience more enjoyable if you work with a partner throughout the semester.

- **Only students with official accommodation forms are allowed to audio/video record class sessions.** Please notify me in advance if this applies to you.

- **No late assignments will be accepted. No exceptions.** If you know you will be missing a particular class session, then you also know that you will miss a quiz. Arriving late may also cause you to miss a quiz. If you submit an assignment through Canvas beyond the deadline, it is considered late and I will therefore not assess it.

- **All written work should adhere to university standards for writing** (see specifics at http://www.montclair.edu/dean-of-students/handbook/writing-standards/). You are responsible for citing/attributing the source of all work (including quotes, videos, images, and logos) that you use as part of your work in this course. Consult the 6th edition of the APA Style Guide on how to do this.

- **I expect you to do your own work for this course, work independently, and give credit for all materials used in your research**. As an MSU student, digital citizen, and a future professional in the workplace, you are responsible for knowing and adhering to the university policies on academic honesty, including citation of all source materials. All students who engage in dishonest acts such as cheating and/or plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary action, which includes failure of the course and possible expulsion from the university. You are solely responsible for understanding what constitutes a violation of academic honesty. Check here: http://www.montclair.edu/dean-of-students/student-conduct/code-conduct/ - academic-dishonesty.

- **If you receive an assignment back and are confused or disagree with assigned grade, I encourage you to discuss it with me.** I do require that you wait at least 24 hours after receiving your grade before contacting me (a "cooling period") so that our discussion can be the most fruitful.

- **Montclair State University is committed to maintaining an environment that is inclusive and free of discrimination, bullying, or harassment**. MSU welcomes persons from all racial, ethnic, social, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Behavior that violates the civil and statutory rights of any individual or group, or interferes with any individual or group's ability to benefit from, or contribute to, the employment, educational, and/or cultural opportunities provided by the University constitutes a violation of University policy and will not be tolerated.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

- **Y**our grade will automatically default to "F" upon your <u>fourth</u> absence from class—no matter the reason for your absence.[5]** In the case of an absence, you are 100 percent responsible for finding out what you missed. Consult the course calendar and plan your semester accordingly. In the case of extreme life circumstances, I recommend that you withdraw from the course so that you can tend to your personal wellbeing. Doing so will ensure that coursework is conducted at a time when full attention may be devoted to the learning experience.

- **Please follow the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" rule.** I will neither ask you the reason for your absence nor do I want to know the reason. I do this to refrain from making judgments or creating any unnecessary bias on my part as the instructor of this course. For this reason, do **not** report your absences to me. Refrain also from submitting a doctor's note, as it is unnecessary. Neither of them will compensate for your lack of class participation due to missing a class session. Your in-class performance and your assignment

---

[5] Missing more than 30 minutes of a class session is considered an absence. Dates as listed on the Provost's official Religious Observance list (holy days) are exempt from this policy and do not count as absences.

submissions speak on your behalf. *If you are experiencing personal trauma, please pay a visit to [Counseling and Psychological Services in Russ Hall.](#)* The services are both free and confidential.

- **There are no repeat performances of class sessions.** If you happen to be absent, do **not** ask me: "Did I miss anything important in class?" because I will always respond with, "Yes, you missed *the most important session of the semester.*" Instead, ask a classmate to share notes with you (and likewise share freely with them). Forming collaborative partnerships with your classmates will dramatically increase your chances of successfully completing (and enjoying) this course.

GRADING STANDARDS:

The following evaluation criteria are applied to all oral, written, and digital assignments that comprise the course of study. Major assignments will be accompanied by more detailed rubrics for assessment.

A—**Demonstration of superior work.** Work demonstrates deep and detailed understanding of material and is logically developed. Sources used are cited appropriately and in accordance with APA style guidelines. Creativity or special insights are evident, and work is free from spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

B—**Very good work.** Work demonstrates a clear understanding of the material and provides relevant details that ground theory in practice. Work displays coherent organization, addresses the purpose of the assignment, and is relatively free from spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

C—**Satisfactory work**. Work, for the most part, demonstrates understanding of material and provides a few relevant details. Work displays a basic level of organization, mildly addresses the purpose of the assignment, and contains spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors.

D—**Unsatisfactory work.** Student work displays a severe lack of understanding of material and provides little or no relevant detail. The work is poorly organized, does not meet the purpose of the assignment, and contains numerous spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting errors

F—**Work is neither satisfactory nor complete.** Student work displays no understanding of material and provides no detail. The work lacks organization, does not meet the purpose of the assignment, and does not adhere to spelling, grammatical, and/or formatting guidelines.

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

RESOURCES AVAILABLE:

- **Instructor Availability**
  I can be reached by phone during office hours and by email. I usually respond within 24 hours Monday through Friday and you can also request an "after hours" Skype appointment during the week. Please allow 48 hours for a response over the weekend as I (like you) have a life outside of academia.

- **Accommodating Students with Disabilities**
  It is important for those students with a documented disability to have the appropriate university staff communicate that information to me. This confidential information may afford modification of seating, testing, or other class requirements. For more information, go to: https://www.montclair.edu/disability-

resource-center/about-our-services/ or visit the Disability Resource Center in Room 100 in Webster Hall (973-655-5431).

- **Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)**
  If you are experiencing stress to the extent that is interfering with your ability to cope with this course and/or normal every day tasks, *please seek help.* At Montclair State University, all counseling services are free, voluntary and confidential. You can call (973) 655-5211 or stop by Russ Hall for an appointment.

- **Emergency Evacuation Plan**
  There is a laminated floor plan posted in our classroom that outlines the safest route to evacuating the building in the case of emergency. Pay particular attention to which (preferably enclosed) stairwell to use in case of building evacuation.

- **Emergency Communication Tools**
  In the event of a campus power outage or inclement weather, check the university web site home page for notifications prior to coming to campus or class. I also recommend that you download the RAVE app for emergency notifications (Go here: https://www.montclair.edu/student-services/msu-cares/apps/)

- **Office of Information Technology Training & Technology Group** offers training events for students. They have designed several workshops that are *specifically* geared for students to assist you in your coursework. To sign up, go to: http://tti.montclair.edu/training/training-development/workshops/