

Taste of Catalonia: Food, Culture, & Tradition

Course Details

Course Designator & Number: BCLA 3039

Number of Credits: 3

Language of Instruction: English

Contact Hours: 45

Instructor: xxx

Course 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.

Course 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.

Experiential Learning & Field Visits

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

Course Prerequisites

None

Required Reading / Materials

- 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>.

Grading

Grading Rubric

Letter Grade	Score or Percentage	Description
A	93–100	Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.
A-	90–92	Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.
B+	87–89	
B	83–86	
B-	80–82	Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.
C+	77–79	
C	73–76	
C-	70–72	Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to fully meet the course requirements.
D+	67–69	
D	60–66	
F	0–59	Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.

Summary of How Grades Are Weighted

Assignments	Percentage of Grade
Participation in class	15%
Journal (1st at 1%, 12 at 2%)	25%
Written report #1 (Poster 3.5%, presentation 3.5%)	7%
Written report #2	3%
Midterm project	20%
Final project	30%
Overall grade	100%

Assessment Details

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 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:**

- o #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.
 - o #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.

Course Content

Unit 1

Understanding Catalonia: History, Culture, & 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)

Unit 2

Essential Ingredients & 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)

Unit 3

The Gastronomic Calendar: Seasonality & 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

Unit 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

Unit 5

Catalan Culinary Literature & 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

Unit 6

Culinary Heritage & 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

Unit 7

Global Influences & Culinary Exchange in Catalonia

- 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

Unit 8

Gastronomic Tourism in Catalonia: Tradition, Experience, & Economic Impact

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

Unit 9

Sustainability & 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

Policies

Attendance Policy

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the on-site syllabus for specific class requirements.

University of Minnesota Policies & Procedures

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else's work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

Scholastic Dishonesty

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an "F" or "N" for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

Student Conduct

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found [on the Learning Abroad Center website](#).