
ANTH 589 (LEC01)
Nutritional Anthropology
GFC Hours 3-0
Fall 2023

Instructor:	Dr. Warren Wilson	Lecture Location:	SA 125
Phone:	403-220-2665	Lecture Days/Time:	Wednesday, 2:00-4:45
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Office:	ES 602D		
Office Hours:	By appointment		

Prerequisites: Anthropology 201 and 305.

COURSE DESCRIPTION



Image from Menzel & deAluisio (1998)
“Man Eating Bugs”

About 200 years ago, Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin wrote, “...tell me what thou eat and I will tell thee what thou art.”¹ Or, more colloquially, “you are what you eat.” Cannon (1964) expanded upon this stating that, “...not only biography and genealogy, but the whole field of anthropology could, if one knew the code, be deduced from food.”

Is food, in fact, a fundamental part of our identity? Today, in Calgary, who we are may seem somewhat removed from what we eat. The cultural distance that some of us now experience from our favored foods,

however, has not always been so great. In fact, human behavior has evolved in great part as an interplay between the environments our ancestors inhabited, their eating behavior, and cultural institutions. Prior to the industrial revolution and in most societies which continue some sort of pre-industrial subsistence pattern, much of an individual’s daily activities were and are devoted to the production of food for their own consumption; a process mediated by both cultural and ecological factors.

The goal of this course is to help you to understand human dietary behaviors as the result of a dynamic web of ecological and cultural factors. To do this, we will cover eight subject areas: (1) the development of nutritional anthropology, (2) basic nutritional principles, (3) basic ecological principles, (4) diet from an evolutionary, comparative, and historic perspective, (5) cultural factors influencing diet, (7) the impact of undernutrition on human physiology and

¹ Jean Anthelme was, not surprisingly, French. This quote comes from his 1825 book, *Physiologie du goût : Méditations de Gastronomie Transcendante*, translated into English as *the Physiology of Taste or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy* – certainly a tantalizing title!

behavior, and (8) methods in nutritional anthropology (Figures 1 & 2). I note that while we will briefly cover dietary requirements, this is not a course on nutrition.²

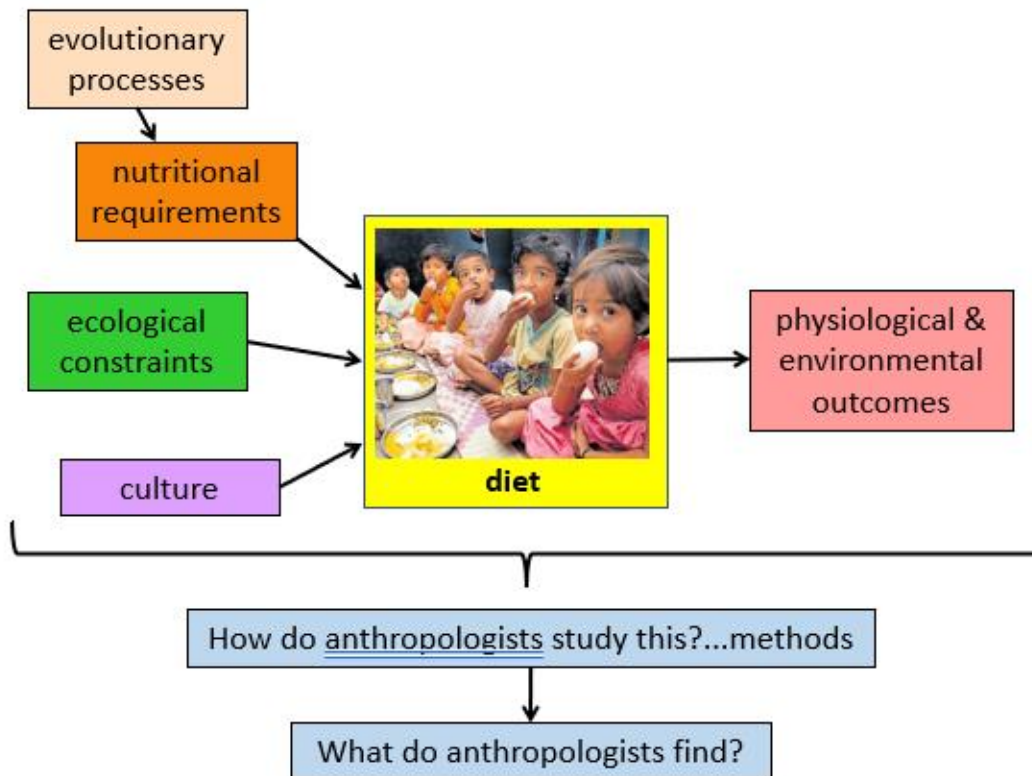


Figure 1: Course Concepts³

² If you're more interested in nutrition specifically, I direct you to KNES 237 - Introduction to Nutrition.

³ With all due respect to those who disagree, following the North American model, I lump archaeology, socio-cultural anthropology & biological anthropology, under the broader discipline of anthropology.

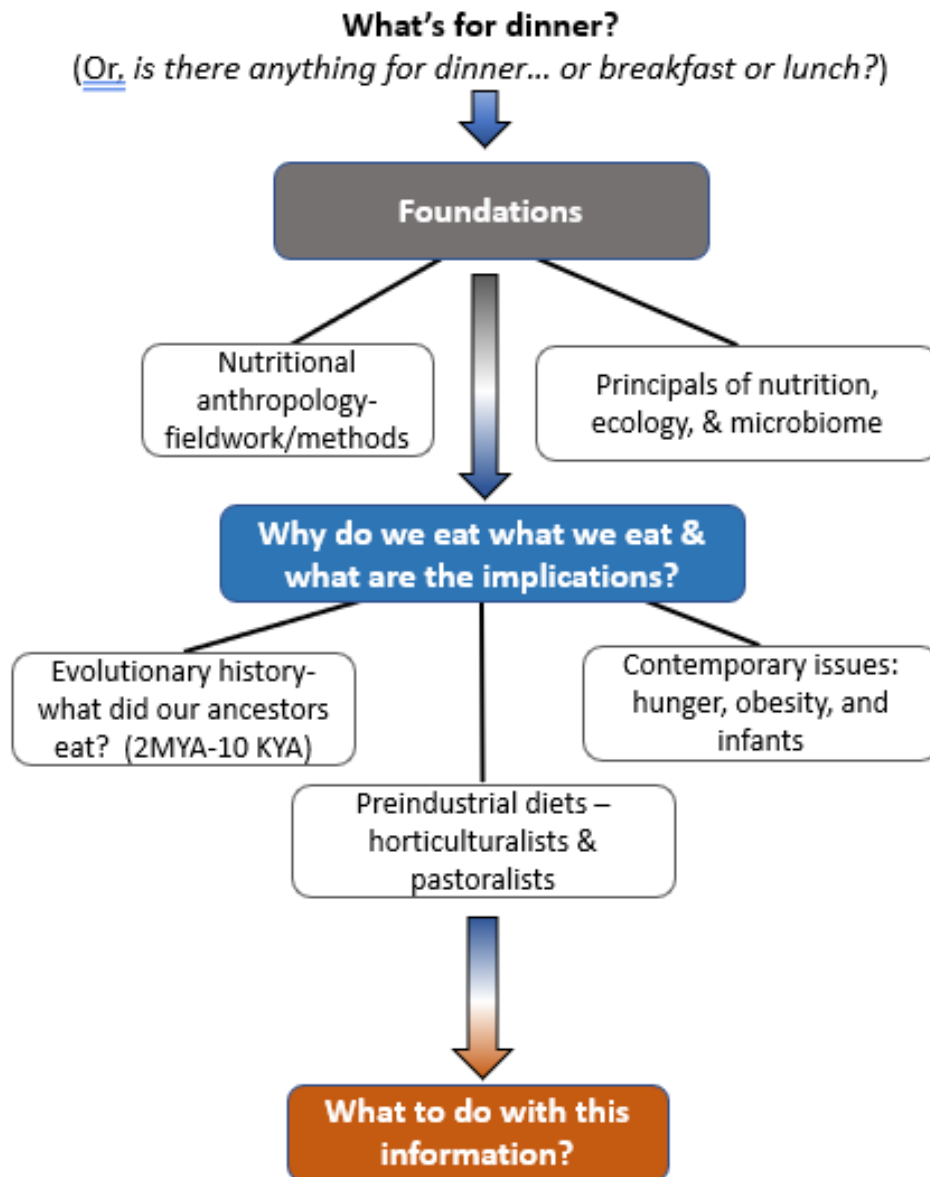


Figure 2: Course Map

READINGS AND TEXTBOOKS:

Your weekly labs and question sets, reading, video, and podcast assignments are be found in the schedule below and Course Bibliography in [D2L > Content](#). In addition to the required materials, optional readings, podcasts, and videos are often provided to enhance your knowledge of the subject in question. Keep in mind that *you are not finished with the reading, podcast, or video assignment until you thoroughly understand it*. There are a variety of strategies to improve your retention of material (e.g. [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), etc....of these my students have told me [that Kaplan's series on how to do well in college](#) is particularly helpful).

Required Books:

Dettwyler 1994. [Dancing Skeletons](#). Waveland Press, IL.

Yates-Doerr 2015. [The Weight of Obesity](#). University of California Press, CA.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology is committed to student knowledge and skill development.

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

1. describe goals and methods of nutritional anthropology;
2. critically evaluate the methods and conclusions found in peer-reviewed papers addressing topics relevant to nutritional anthropology;
3. describe the strengths and weaknesses of quantitative and qualitative data;
4. describe basic macro- & micronutrient requirements and the physiology of digestion;
5. describe variables which influence one's diet (including ecology, culture, organoleptic properties, nutrient requirements, & evolutionary history);
6. describe the evolution of the human diet;
7. describe the costs and benefits of agriculture for human health;
8. describe the dietary practices of East African pastoralists and Indigenous tropical rainforest peoples;
9. describe the evidence for and against cannibalism;
10. describe the debates concerning breastfeeding;
11. describe the short- and long-term impacts of undernutrition and the methods used to assess nutritional status;

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY and EQUIPMENT:

You are required to have access to a computer or similar equipment to enable you to read and post assignments on the class D2L site.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

You will be evaluated based on class participation, your reflective journal, a journal article review, a dietary intake/energy expenditure study, and a term paper, each of which will be weighted as follows:

Item	Weight
Class participation	20%
Question sets	16%
Reflective journal	14%
Journal article review	10%
Dietary Intake/Energy Expenditure Study	20%
Term Paper	20%

Rubrics for each of these can be found in [D2L > Assessments > Rubrics](#). The assignments can be found in [D2L > Content > Assignments](#). Deadlines for assignments other than the journal article review can be found below in the course Schedule. I will post the deadline for your journal article review by September 11th.

While I will keep track of your class participation, on December 7, you will evaluate your own participation, If, however, I believe that you've been too hard or easy on yourself in this, I reserve

the right to alter your score. As such it is important that you familiarize yourself before the first class with the rubric for this aspect of your evaluation ([D2L > Assessments > Individual participation self-appraisal](#)). Note that if you feel awkward chatting with those sitting around you and your class at large, you are not alone. I do this not to torment you but because this method has been found to improve student engagement, differentiate instruction, and give you more of a voice in a large class where you otherwise might have none. Furthermore and likely counterintuitive to some, [talking to strangers is good for your mental health](#) (yes, [this is true even if you are shy](#)). As your participation is a critical part of the learning process, you must arrive on time and be prepared for discussion. If you arrive late or leave early without my permission, I will note this and consider it when I review your final participation score. As well, **if you arrive/leave >15 minutes late/early without my permission, I will count you as absent for that day.**

For your weekly [question sets](#), I will first check to ensure that all questions have been answered. If, for example, you answered only 8 of 11 assigned questions, I will deduct 27% (3/11) from your overall score. Second, I will carefully assess your work on 2 to 3 of the questions. Assuming you have completed all of the assigned questions, your work on the questions I carefully assess will determine your overall question set score. You must complete these questions on your own, with no help from others or any artificial intelligence applications. Your weekly question set must be posted to [D2L > Dropbox > Weekly Question Set > \(week of assignment\)](#) each Wednesday no later than 1:00 pm. The assignment for the [reflective journal](#) can be found in [D2L > Content > Reflective Journal Assignment](#). The reflective journal can be as short as one paragraph in length and is assigned to help you to think more deeply about the material covered that week and to tie it to your own life. It must be uploaded to [D2L > Dropbox > Reflective Journal Assignment > \(week of assignment\)](#) each Wednesday no later than 8:00 pm. At the end of each of your reflective journals, you will provide your own evaluation of your reflective journal on the basis of the reflective journal rubric.

Late assignments *may* be accepted in the case of serious illness or medical emergency, religious observance, or domestic affliction (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-final-exams>). To determine whether or not you may turn in work late, **you must submit a request to me within 24 hours of the original due date.** If you do not contact me within 24-hours of the due date, you forfeit the right for an extension on your due date. If I do give you permission to turn in work late, **you must upload your missed weekly question set, or lab report to D2L within 24 hours of my approval.** If you submit a request for an extension, I may ask you to provide supporting documentation. Regardless, students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. Supporting documentation may be dependent on the reason noted in their personal statement/explanation provided to explain their situation. This could be medical certificate/documentation, references, police reports, invitation letter, or a statutory declaration, etc. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note. Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

Should you wish to defer term work exceed the end of the term, you must complete a Deferral of Term Work form and submit it to the Office of the Registrar. Your deferral will be recorded on the your record. Deferrals are granted at the discretion of the Dean or designate and are normally

granted for 30 days beyond the last day of the term. Should circumstances warrant, the maximum time that may be granted for a deferral of term work is one additional term. Approved extensions must be sent to the Office of the Registrar. Application information is available at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/student-centre/student-forms>. Deferral of the registrar-scheduled final exam requires Registrar approval (<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-final-exams>).

Reappraisal of Graded Term Work: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

Reappraisal of Final Grade: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology Grading Scheme:

A+	95 – 100%	B+	80 – 84.9%	C+	67 – 70.9%	D+	55 – 58.9%
A	90 – 94.9%	B	75 – 79.9%	C	63 – 66.9%	D	50 – 54.9%
A-	85 – 89.9%	B-	71 – 74.9%	C-	59 – 62.9%	F	< 50%

No extra credit or 'make up' work is available in this class. A passing grade is not required on any particular component for the student to pass the course as a whole; that is, a student may fail, for example, their paper review or any other component and, assuming their overall average percentage earned for the course is above 50%, they will pass the course.

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3.

Acknowledgment and Respect for Diversity

The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology views diversity of identity as a strength and resource. Your experiences and different perspectives are encouraged and add to a rich learning environment that fosters critical thought through respectful discussion and inclusion.

COURSE POLICIES

1. My teaching philosophy⁴: In short, I encourage students cultivate their sense of skepticism about the status quo, to make connections among seemingly disparate phenomena, and to see things from another's point of view. I have no interest in telling you what you must think. Instead, I will provide evidence that will allow you to reach your own conclusions. I do not seek to provide you with an intellectually safe space, but endeavor to challenge you with new ideas with which you will have to engage to reach your own, informed conclusions. The free exchange of ideas is a fundamental part of democratic society. That said, civility and mutual respect are vital to all of us,

⁴ For more on my teaching philosophy, please see: [D2L > Content > Course Outline > Teaching Philosophy](#)

and freedom of expression does not mean the freedom to harass or threaten others. I consequently expect you to be engaged in evidence-based, rigorous debate, discussion, and even disagreement with one another and me. At times, this may challenge you and even cause discomfort.

2. Flipped classroom: All of us are familiar with traditional teaching in which the teacher talks at students, with, perhaps a bit of interaction from the students. This course takes a different approach. Our discussions will use flipped classroom approach. In short, this means that while I may provide recorded lectures for you to watch prior to the class, I will rarely lecture in the class. Instead, you should arrive prepared to discuss the concepts covered in the weekly question set. In class discussions, I will endeavor to gauge your understanding of the material, the intellectual effort you've made to master it, and to develop your critical thinking skills. It's sometimes messy and may leave you with more questions than you started. I take this approach as data obtained in a wide range of academic settings and a wide range of academic disciplines show that learning gains nearly triple with an approach that focuses on the student and interactive learning ([Fagan et al. 2002](#), [Lasry et al. 2008](#)). As such, dive into the assigned materials and do the required intellectual heavy lifting before showing up in class each week.

3. Workload: As you may have heard, the workload for this course is heavy. I don't assign this work to make you miserable, but because this is a fourth-year seminar that meets only once a week. My expectations of fourth-year students are high and almost all the students I've had in this seminar have met or exceeded those expectations. That said, if you expect the same amount of work per class as you might find in a class that meets twice or three times a week, you'll be surprised as we'll be covering one week of work each time we meet.

4. How can you get in touch with me? If you have a question, it may already be answered in the syllabus, assignment documents, or rubrics. Check there first. If your question is not answered there, please reach out to me. When writing, please write 'ANTH 589' in the 'Subject' portion of the email. In the body of your message please provide your first and last name and use proper, not text-message, grammar. By identifying the subject of your email and writing a clear message, you will help me to reply more efficiently to your emails. I will do my best to reply within one business day.

5. Office Hours: I enjoy conversations with students. Whether you would like to discuss in greater detail something that was touched on in class or the assigned material or are having difficulty with some aspect of the course, I am happy to meet with you. If you want to make an appointment, please contact me and indicate the times when you are available.

6. What does my grade mean? Per the [University of Calgary Calendar](#), an "A" is earned for "excellent-superior performance, showing comprehensive understanding of subject matter". Superior performance is, by definition, rare; that is, superior is defined as "highest in quality". More common is the grade of "B" which is earned for "clearly above average performance with knowledge of subject matter generally complete". More common still is the grade of "C" which is earned for a "satisfactory - basic understanding of the subject matter". If you require clarification on letter grade assignments, please contact me within the first two weeks of the semester. Keep in mind that, you have paid for the opportunity to learn, not a grade. As such, my teaching

assistants and I do our utmost to ensure that you have the best possible learning opportunity in this course.

7. Recording class discussions: Unless you have my permission to do so via an Academic Accommodation, you may not record our class discussions.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/student-services/access>. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor or the Department Head. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf>.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic integrity is the foundation of the development and acquisition of knowledge and is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility, and respect. We expect members of our community to act with integrity. The University Calendar includes a statement on the principles of conduct expected of all members of the university community (including students, faculty, administrators, any category of staff, practicum supervisors, and volunteers), whether on or off university property. This statement applies in all situations where members of the university community are acting in their university capacities. All members of the university community have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the principles of conduct statement, which is available at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect.

Academic dishonesty is not an acceptable activity at the University of Calgary, and students are **strongly advised** to read the Student Misconduct section in the University Calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html. Often, students are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The most common are (1) presenting another student's work as your own, (2) presenting an author's work or ideas as your own without adequate citation, and (3) using work completed for another course. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course, and students suspected of academic misconduct will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-procedure>

For students wishing to know more about what constitutes plagiarism and how to properly cite the work of others, the Department of Geography recommends that they attend Academic Integrity

workshops offered through the Student Success Centre: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Course materials created by professor(s) (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing. Information on Instructor Intellectual Property can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/intellectual-property-policy>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING, SUCCESS, AND SAFETY

Please visit the Registrar's website at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE^a

Date	Topic	Reading Assignment ^b
Sep. 6	Introduction, Anthropology, Field Methods in Nutritional Anthropology I – Anthropometry part A	Your syllabus, Wilson 2018, Peltó 1989, + a peer-reviewed paper of your choice on secular trends
Sep. 13	Field Methods in Nutritional Anthropology 2- Anthropometry part B, Nutritional anthropology in Mali	Dettwyler 1994, Peltó 1989
Sep. 20	Critical thinking, Nutritional anthropology: history, Cali project, different approaches to the study of food.	Sagan 1996, Greenhalgh & Taylor 1997, Pope & Ziebland 2000 ^c , Harris 1978, Allison 1991
Sep. 27	Basic principles of nutrition: physiology of digestion, macro- & micronutrients	Ruggiero 2004 Ch. 19, Peltó 2003, Peltó et al. 2000 ^c , and TBD
Oct. 4	Organoleptic Properties & Food Choice Basic principles of ecology: energy flow and nutrient cycles	Informed health online (2015), Rozin 1987, Southwick 1996
Oct. 11	Evolutionary perspective: what did our ancestors eat? (Part I)	Cordain et al. 2000, Milton 2000, Stanford 1995, Klein 2000 ^c , Hockett and Haws 2003 ^c
Oct. 13	<i>Dietary intake/energy expenditure project due.</i>	
Oct. 18	Evolutionary perspective: what did our ancestors eat? (Part II)	TBD
Oct. 25	Staple crops: strengths & weaknesses Pre-industrial diets: Tropical rainforests, Why manioc?	Normille 2000, Moran 1993, Dufour et al. 2016, Dufour 1995 ^c
Nov. 1	Pre-industrial diets: East African Pastoralists (Video: <i>Year of the Clouds</i>)	Moran (1982), Galvin et al. (1994), McCabe (1990), Fratkin (2001) ^c , Galvin (2009) ^c
Nov. 8	Cannibalism? Culture & infant feeding	Harner 1977, Preston 1998, Bergner 2003, Peltó 1981, Levine 1988, Gray 1996 ^c
Nov. 15	<i>Reading break: no class</i>	
Nov. 22	Undernutrition: physiological impacts	Whitney and Rolfes 2005 (Review PEM), Goodman et al. 2000, Frisancho 1993, Pelletier 1994, Martorell 1989, Martorell et al. 1992 ^c , Chavez et al. 1995 ^c , de Onis et al. 1993 ^c
Nov. 29	Undernutrition: adaptations, Field Methods in Nutritional Anthropology 3	TBD
Dec. 6	Malnutrition: Obesity & Public Health, Field Methods in Nutritional Anthropology 4	Yates-Doerr 2015
Dec. 14	<i>Term paper due.</i>	

^a Note, the schedule of topics may change.

^b The reading assignments are subject to change should I find, during the present semester, more recent publications which better cover the topic considered. If this occurs, I will inform you no later than 2 weeks prior to the relevant class.

^c This paper is suggested, not required.