

Barbecue Communication

COM 495/595 Section 971, CRN 33933/33934

Summer Interim 2017, Seminar, 3 credit hours –meets May 8, 2017 – May 26, 2017

Domestic Travel Course – 3rd week of class, BBQ Tour of portion of U.S.

Professor: Darrin J. Griffin, PhD (BBQ cook & connoisseur)

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“My life is in these bottles” ~Stubbs BBQ Sauce

“Now the first and greatest of necessities is food, which is the condition of life and existence” ~Plato (*The Republic*)

“Being so closely related to the South, barbecue was part of segregation and helped defeat it” ~Bobby Seale, Black political activist

Course Description and Rationale

This communication course is designed to introduce students to the rich history and culture of Barbecue (BBQ). Students will examine how BBQ is heavily influenced by human communication—through the verbal, nonverbal, linguistic, and cultural practices of those who cook and eat it. Communication is also influenced by BBQ. This course will cover how BBQ has been an influential element in politics – it supported the civil rights movement in the South and has been used by several politicians (e.g., U.S. President LBJ) as a campaign tool and mechanism of influence. By examining the multiple perspectives of those who prepare and consume this cuisine, students will better understand the taken for granted, and not so taken for granted, influences of BBQ in the multiple facets of our lives. Through reading and discussing the influence of family, religion, gender, music, & media and popular portrayals. Overall, this course will rely on three methods to examine BBQ communication: in the first week students will meet in a traditional classroom and discuss readings on the topic of BBQ and listen to guest speakers; the second week of the course will allow students to engage in their own enactment of BBQs through the enactment of their own cookouts; and in the third week of the class students will capture the experience of this topic through a journey across multiple states to eat BBQ and meet those people who make it such a central part of their lives (and cultures). The travel component will take this traveling classroom to BBQ meccas such as Austin, TX; Oklahoma City, OK; Kansas City, MO; Memphis, TN; and Decatur Alabama. Students who enroll in this class should have an insatiable appetite for learning and clearly...eating BBQ! The enjoyment of road trips is a must.

This course is dual numbered (i.e., COM 495 & COM 595) to allow both undergraduate and graduate students to benefit from this experiential course. In addition to completing all of the course work on this syllabus graduate students will be required to read all of the remaining chapters in the assigned textbook on food as communication; also, graduate students will be required to produce a complete research proposal on a topic relevant to this class.

Topics Covered

- The history of BBQ and an introduction
 - The people
 - Cultures
 - Rituals
 - Meats
- The basics of BBQ (a verb & a noun)
 - Defining BBQ
 - Is grilling the same as BBQ(ing)?
 - Types of animals and cuts of meat – talking the terminology
 - The sides of BBQ – can you cater to a vegetarian?
- Globalization of BBQ
 - Where can you find BBQ?
 - Texas-ification of BBQ
 - American BBQ
 - Regional dialects (ways of cooking and speaking)
 - New York City!!! Picante sauces @ the BBQ
 - Chili – beans or no beans – another Texan dilemma
- Blues & Q: music, music festivals and BBQ competitions
 - Music and genres
 - Why cook for competition?
 - Rules and regulations
- How long ya'll cook this for? Masculinity, gender, & leisure culture
 - Expressing masculinity through BBQ
 - Big meats
 - Fire
 - Slow cooking
 - Women and men and BBQ roles
- *There ain't no Grey Poupon here!*
 - Social class & BBQ
 - The poor – traditions and style and how to talk BBQ
 - The middle class – suburbia – 'we are going out for BBQ tonight kids'
 - The rich – 'this smoker cost \$3K and this ice chest set me back \$500'
- Race, ethnicity, and Religion
 - Gentrification and BBQ restaurants
 - Black BBQing
 - Supporting the civil rights movement – Black owned BBQ restaurants
 - Latin, Hispanic, & Mexican BBQing
 - White BBQing
 - Greek Easter & other religious ceremonial BBQs
- Industrialization
 - The McRib is back on the menu
 - 'Texas Toast comes with that plate'; restaurants and menu items
 - BBQ-fusion and other integration with local cuisines
 - BBQ sushi? Foods that aren't BBQ but bare the name

- Verbal and nonverbal BBQ-ommunication
 - How to talk at a BBQ
 - Terminology
 - Tempo
 - Topics
 - Can you talk with your mouth full?
 - How to act at a BBQ
 - Dress
 - Gestures
 - Emotion
 - Silence
 - Eating rituals & other manners

Required Texts

1. *Barbecue: A global history* (2014). Jonathan Deutsch & Megan J. Elias, Reaktion Books; London, UK.
2. *Food as communication: Communication as food* (2011). Janet M. Cramer, Carlanita P. Greene, & Lynn M. Walters, Peter Lang Publishers; NY, NY.

Prerequisites

No prerequisites are required for this course, though vegetarians may not find this course to be a good fit for their palate.

Student Learning Outcomes

After completion of this course students will be able to:

- Define BBQ and articulate why it is important to communication
- Recite a general history of BBQ and its influence on humans
- Describe the impact BBQ has on culture and religions
- Discuss how BBQ influences perceptions of masculinity and gender
- Become familiar with the communication, tools, and techniques used by people who BBQ
- Understand the socio-historical implications BBQ has had on race and politics in the United States
- Articulate how food in general is a communication construct and its influences on verbal, nonverbal, and relational communication
- Eat BBQ in cities known for their style and production to examine differences in production, style, and dialects

Evaluation

Student learning and performance throughout the course will be evaluated and measured using:

- Reading reflection vlogs; 5 worth 5 points each = 20 pts
- Reading quizzes; 5 worth 5 points each = 25 pts
- Current events article searches = 10 pts
- *Attendance/On time/Warm-up assignments (start of class) = 10 pts
*Note – these cannot be made up
- Wikipedia page development = 5 pts
- Discussion & activity leader = 10 pts
- Final Digital presentation (undergraduate students) = 20 pts
- Final full research proposal (graduate students) = 20 pts

Total course points = 100

Details of each of these evaluations will be discussed during class time and direction sheets will be provided to students.

Grading Policy

Students are evaluated in their performance and learning via points. A total of 100 points are available and a grading rubric (on next page) will be used to assign the final letter grade. Do not calculate your grade or conduct mathematical magic - simply use the grading rubric below to determine your final letter grade at the end of the course. As a reminder - do not contact me near the close of the term and ask for opportunities for points. These type of requests will be ignored. I welcome students to communicate with me throughout the course on how to improve and earn the most points possible. The simplest prescription is to read and prepare for class.

Visit the registrar's site on the [meaning of letter grades](#) to better understand and read an **explanation of the assigned final letter grades**. Although extra credit *might* be given in this course, it will be infrequent and students should not rely on it to earn the desired letter grade. Extra credit - if given - is *extra*. It does not change the scale for the class – the rubric will always be based off 100 points, extra points will only serve to help you get more points. The way to earn the desired letter grade is by completing assessments, being on time to every class, and working to understand and follow the course content.

Point to Letter Grade Rubric

| Final Points | Letter Grade |
|--------------|--------------|
| 100-97 | A+ |
| 96-94 | A |
| 93-90 | A- |
| 89-87 | B+ |
| 86-84 | B |

| | |
|-------|----|
| 83-80 | B- |
| 79-77 | C+ |
| 76-74 | C |
| 73-70 | C- |
| 69-67 | D+ |
| 66-64 | D |
| 63-60 | D- |
| 59-0 | F |

Grade Requirement Statement

Students must earn a “C-” or better in all required and elective courses in the major /minor for communication studies. A “C-” or better is required in all external courses required by the major/minor whether they serve as a prerequisite to a major course or are simply required by the degree.

Attendance Policy

This is a three-week interim course. The first week of class will be held in a classroom at Reese Phifer, Monday – Friday from 10am until noon. The second week of the course will be conducted via two BBQs to be held on campus or at a park in Tuscaloosa; in the third week students will travel with the professor in a UA van and visit BBQ meccas such as Austin, Texas; Kansas City, MO; & Memphis, TN. For an exact route of the road trip – see Appendix. Due to the short timeline of this interim class – students cannot miss a class without a grade penalty. Missing a class will lower the letter grade one increment (e.g., A+ to A for one absence) and classes cannot be made up. If a student arrives more than 30 minutes late to a class that will constitute an absence. Coming late to class twice (more than 5 minutes late each) will count as an absence. Students who will have attendance issues should consider taking another class instead of this one – you can’t be late when it comes to BBQ!

Week 1: Class will meet in the morning on the first five days in this first week (Monday thru Friday) for two hours (i.e., 10am- 12pm) in Reese Phifer at the UA campus. This portion of the course will focus on covering the fundamentals and communicative elements of BBQ. Students will be assigned readings and homework assignments to fulfill the topics and student learning outcomes of the course.

Week 2: Two BBQs will be held outdoors on campus or at a local park in Tuscaloosa. These will start early in the morning (e.g., 6am) on Monday (5/15/17) and Wednesday (5/17/17) and each will run past lunchtime (e.g., 1:00pm). Exact details on these picnics/BBQs will be given in the first week of the class- students should be prepared to be available at the BBQ from 6am – 1pm on those two days. Course readings and assessments will be assigned this week as well to continue to fulfill the student learning outcomes of the course.

Week 3: On Friday (5/19/17), the Friday of the second week of class we will depart via a UA van from the rear parking lot of Reese Phifer at 7:00am for our BBQ tour/travels. For the exact route see Appendix. The professor will be the designated

driver of the van, but at least one student volunteer will be required to assist in driving – this will require a check of the student’s driving record and some minimal online driver safety training. Students interested in assisting with driving should let the professor know as soon as possible (e.g., during enrollment period) – student volunteers will only be required to drive 1-2 hours on long days of driving to give the professor a break (required by UA policy).

Missed Work

Keep in mind missing one of our classes is equivalent to missing a week of a normal semester class! Also, once you are registered for the class you are responsible for being in class (no exceptions). Students are expected to attend class and to be on time. Class will start promptly at the scheduled time and tardy students will serve only to disrupt the classroom activities. Please arrive before the start of class. Students having difficulty attending class or arriving on time will earn lower final grades (see Attendance Policy above). Students having any absence will have their final letter grade dropped by an entire increment (e.g., A+ to A for one absence). Any work that is missed for any reason must be made up before the next class day. Failure to coordinate how to submit a makeup within this time frame will result in a zero for the evaluation. Any late assignment – for any reason will receive late deduction points (i.e., 20%). The way to avoid late work is to do it early so that an unexpected conflict does not interfere with the completion of work.

Classroom Etiquette & Expectations

Students are expected to arrive in class on-time and prepared. Preparation means that you have read assigned readings and completed any assignments that are due. Please be considerate of others. Turn off cellular phones, iPods, pagers, laptops and any other electronic devices prior to the start of class. Do not text or use a laptop or device during class. Students who do not honor the policy on electronics in the classroom will be dismissed from class. Texting or surfing the web during class disrupts your learning and others ability to focus.

Each individual is expected to earn his/her course grade on the merit of personal effort. Consequently, any form of cheating or plagiarism constitutes unacceptable deceit and dishonesty and will result in disciplinary action. The Code of Student Conduct requires that students behave in a manner that is conducive to a teaching/learning environment. Students who engage in behavior that is disruptive or obstructive to the teaching/learning environment will be subject to disciplinary sanctions outlined by the Code of Student Conduct. If a student engages in disruptive or inappropriate behavior, I will first give a warning and discuss this with the student. Repeat offenders will politely be asked to excuse themselves from the class for that day.

All students in attendance at the University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. Academic misconduct includes all acts of

dishonesty in any academically related matter and any knowing or intentional help or attempt to help, or conspiracy to help, another student. The Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Policy will be followed in the event of academic misconduct.

UA Statement on Diversity

The mission of The University of Alabama is to advance the intellectual and social condition of the people of the State through quality programs of teaching, research, and service. That educational mission is enhanced by the robust exchange of ideas that occurs within a diverse and inclusive environment. Students who learn from each other and from faculty members and administrators, including those at the highest levels of leadership, in an environment with a variety of backgrounds are better able to understand, appreciate, and contribute to our twenty-first century global society. Consequently, the University endorses a student, faculty, and administrative community enriched by women and men of diverse national origins, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, cultures, socioeconomic and geographic backgrounds, ages, physical abilities, and religious and political beliefs.

To report ANY type of harassment prohibited by UA policy, see <http://titleix.ua.edu/report-a-violation.html>

Response to Threatening Person or Shooting Incident

Should a shooter or a person with a weapon appear on campus, call the [University Police](#) 205-348-5454 or 911 as soon as safely possible. The University Police Department is trained to deal with this incident and will respond immediately upon notification. If this type of incident should take place on campus during our class, please follow my instructions and requests.

In general, each situation is different, so no single procedure will work in all circumstances. You will have to make the best decision based on your particular situation. Always be aware of your surroundings as you determine how best to protect yourself. The Department of Homeland Security offers the following suggestions:

Run: If there is an accessible escape path, attempt to evacuate the premises.

Hide: If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide where the active shooter is less likely to find you.

Fight: As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the active shooter.

You can read more about the details and suggestions offered for an active shooter scenario at the UA emergency preparedness website -

<https://ready.ua.edu/shooting-incident/>

Severe Weather Guidelines

The guiding principle at The University of Alabama is to promote the personal safety of our students, faculty and staff during severe weather events. It is impossible to develop policies which anticipate every weather-related emergency. These guidelines are intended to provide additional assistance for responding to severe

weather on campus. UA is a residential campus with many students living on or near campus. In general classes will remain in session until the National Weather Service issues safety warnings for the city of Tuscaloosa. Clearly, some students and faculty commute from adjacent counties. These counties may experience weather related problems not encountered in Tuscaloosa. Individuals should follow the advice of the National Weather Service for that area taking the necessary precautions to ensure personal safety. Whenever the National Weather Service and the Emergency Management Agency issue a warning, people in the path of the storm (tornado or severe thunderstorm) should take immediate lifesaving actions. When West Alabama is under a severe weather advisory, conditions can change rapidly. It is imperative to get to where you can receive information from the [National Weather Service](#) and to follow the instructions provided. Personal safety should dictate the actions that faculty, staff and students take.

The Office of University Relations will disseminate the latest information regarding conditions on campus in the following ways:

- Weather advisory posted on the UA homepage
- Weather advisory sent out through UA Alerts to faculty, staff and students
- Weather advisory broadcast over WVUA at 90.7 FM
- Weather advisory broadcast over Alabama Public Radio (WUAL) at 91.5 FM
- Weather advisory broadcast over WVUA-TV/WUOA-TV, and on the website at <http://wvuatv.com/content/weather>. WVUA-TV Home Team Weather provides a free service you can subscribe to which allows you to receive weather warnings for Tuscaloosa via e-mail or cell phone. Check <http://wvuatv.com/content/free-email-weather-alerts> for more details and to sign up for weather alerts.

In the case of a tornado warning (tornado has been sighted or detected by radar; sirens activated), all university activities are automatically suspended, including all classes and laboratories. If you are in a building, please move immediately to the lowest level and toward the center of the building away from windows (interior classrooms, offices, or corridors) and remain there until the tornado warning has expired. Classes in session when the tornado warning is issued can resume immediately after the warning has expired at the discretion of the instructor. Classes that have not yet begun will resume 30 minutes after the tornado warning has expired provided at least half of the class period remains.

Disability Statement

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss any course accommodations that may be necessary.

If you have a disability, but have not contacted the Office of Disability Services, please call (205) 348-4285 (Voice) or (205) 348-3081 (TTY) or visit 133-B Martha Parham Hall East to register for services. Students who may need course adaptations because of a disability are welcome to make an appointment to see me during office hours. Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of

Disability Services, 133-B Martha Parham Hall East, before receiving academic adjustments.

Policy on Academic Misconduct

All students in attendance at The University of Alabama are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars. The University of Alabama expects from its students a higher standard of conduct than the minimum required to avoid discipline. At the beginning of each semester and on examinations and projects, the professor, department, or division may require that each student sign the following Academic Honor Pledge: "I promise or affirm that I will not at any time be involved with cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, or misrepresentation while enrolled as a student at The University of Alabama. I have read the Academic Honor Code, which explains disciplinary procedure resulting from the aforementioned. I understand that violation of this code will result in penalties as severe as indefinite suspension from the University." See the [Code of Student Conduct](#) for more information.

Schedule & Topics

Week 1: UA classroom – Monday thru Friday 10am – 12pm

*BBQ book = *Barbecue: A global history*

**FAC/CAF book = *Food as communication: Communication as Food*

Monday 5/8/17

1. Teacher and student introductions & review of course and syllabus
 - a. Activity – "the five senses and how they facilitate communicate"
 - b. Defining communication – verbal and nonverbal elements
 - c. Introduction to everyone's background with BBQ

Homework – Read Chapters 1-3 of *BBQ book before Tuesday

Tuesday 5/9/17

2. Defining BBQ
 - a. Terminology and other vernacular
 - b. The physical world of BBQ and safety
 - c. Details of the travel element of the course – timelines and travel safety

Homework – Read chapters 4, 5, & 6 of *BBQ book before Wednesday

Wednesday 5/10/17

3. History of BBQ
 - a. Who, what, when, where, how
 - b. The first BBQs
 - c. Southern heritage and segregation – de jure and de facto racial divides
 - d. Presidential elections; Lyndon Baines Johnson's presidential BBQs
 - e. Tuscaloosa's historical BBQ restaurants (e.g., Dreamland)

Homework – Read newspaper articles about Black BBQ restaurants before Thursday

Thursday 5/11/17

4. BBQ as communication
 - a. Social, culture, linguistic elements
 - b. Verbal and nonverbal dynamics
 - c. Dress, talk, and topics discussed at BBQs

Homework – Read FAC/CAF Introduction and Chapters 5, 6, & 10

Friday 5/12/17

5. Review of BBQ communication elements & prepare for picnics
 - a. Revisit definitions and terminology
 - b. Social constructs at play – masculinity
 - c. The Battle Plan for our BBQs & safety measures

Homework – Read FAC/CAF Chapters 7, 9, & 14

Week 2: Two BBQ picnics

Monday 5/15/17

6. Meet at 6am and BBQ until lunch – clean up and dismiss at 1pm

Wednesday 5/17/17

7. Meet at 6am and BBQ until lunch – clean up and dismiss at 1pm

Friday 5/19/17

8. Friday morning 7am – meet at Reese Phifer back parking lot to load up in UA Van and head to first BBQ mecca (Austin, TX).

Week 3: BBQ Road Trip

9. Class arrives in Austin, TX Friday evening (5/19/2017), stay in rental house or hotel near University of Texas campus – class to go to BBQ lunch (location TBD) together in Austin on Saturday (5/20/2017). Students have free time in Austin to enjoy the city. Group to depart late Sunday morning for Oklahoma City (OKC).
10. Arrive to OKC Sunday evening (5/21/2017) and spend the night in a hotel. Spend Monday morning relaxing and eat BBQ lunch (location TBD) before leaving town for Kansas City, MO (KC).
11. Arrive in KC Monday evening and stay in rental house (Monday and Tuesday night). Spend the day exploring the city and eat a BBQ lunch (location TBD) as a class. Depart Wednesday morning (5/24/17) for Memphis, TN.
12. Arrive in Memphis Wednesday night and eat BBQ dinner – spend the night in hotel. Depart late Thursday morning (5/25/17) for Decatur AL.
13. Thursday- eat late lunch/early dinner at Big Bob’s BBQ in Decatur, AL. Drive back to Tuscaloosa and arrive late Thursday evening (5/25/17).
14. Course formally ends on Friday (5/26/17), however, undergraduate students will submit their final digital presentation by Tuesday 5/30/17 at noon. Graduate research proposals due at same time. Grades due at midnight.

Appendix. Map of travel route

2,325 miles round trip

