

The Justice of Fermentation



Yes, we CAN!

Summer 2024; First Session (June 24th - July 27th); 4 credits, hybrid

Faculty: Prita Lal, Faculty in Food Justice; lalp@evergreen.edu

Being in Contact:

Email and messages sent via Canvas will be the best way to be in contact with faculty. Faculty will reach out to students via Canvas announcements, Canvas emails, and emails to students' Evergreen email accounts. Please check these frequently.

**First Class Meeting: Saturday, June 29th at 11 am in the SAL
(Sustainable Agriculture Lab)**

Program Description:

Food justice is a holistic and structural view of the food system that treats real, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food as a human right and addresses structural barriers to that right. Social movements for food justice are typically led by the communities most directly impacted, particularly low-income communities of color. In this course, we'll study this topic along with considering questions like: What is the history of how our food system came to be? What are the legacies of colonialism and enslavement on our current system? How does power operate in the food system?

This course will offer an interdisciplinary inquiry into food justice topics, linking the social and natural sciences. We will study topics that intersect with the natural sciences, with a focus on the microbiome (the diverse microorganisms that make up the terrain of our bodies and our environment). How does pollution (including the chemicals used to grow and process our food) harm our microbiome and which

groups are disproportionately impacted? What are the ecological impacts of food waste? How can traditional foodways (like fermented foods) heal our health and help reduce food waste? What are the benefits of fermented foods and how can we prepare them? This course will include opportunities for hands-on learning through at-home food fermentation and cooking workshops.

Readings will include *Farming While Black* by Leah Penniman, *Our Fermented Lives* by food historian Julia Skinner, and *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Katz. This course will be taught online with weekly asynchronous Canvas modules and 3 synchronous classes over the session (2 of these classes will be held on Zoom and 1 will be held in-person at the Sustainable Agriculture Lab on campus). Students will need a computer (with a microphone and speakers and preferably with a camera) and internet access.

Schedule: for all students:

See [definition of Hybrid, Remote, and In-Person instruction](#).

Week 1, Saturday, June 29th at 11 am until 2 pm in the SAL (Sustainable Agriculture Lab) **IN-PERSON**

Week 2, Saturday, July 6th at 11 am until 2 pm on Zoom

Week 5, Saturday, July 27th at 11 am until 2 pm on Zoom

Asynchronous modules (includes films, recorded lectures, podcasts, and discussion board threads): roughly 5 hours a week (excluding readings and assignments) for week 1-5.

Required texts:

- *Our Fermented Lives* by Julia Skinner. 2022. Storey Publishing. Reserve copy available at Evergreen library and E-Book available through Evergreen with your login:

<https://web-p-ebSCOhost-com.evergreen.idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?vid=0&sid=4e78cfae-09f8-4fdc-b19a-e5baa5c7bac1%40redis&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=3024129&db=nlebk>

- *Wild Fermentation* by Sandor Katz. 2016. Chelsea Green Publishing. E-Book available through Evergreen with your login:

<https://ebookcentral-proquest-com.evergreen.idm.oclc.org/lib/esu/detail.action?docID=5149013>

Required Fees: \$30 for hands-on workshop and supplies

Optional Supplies (for your at-home fermentation project):

Culture strains (non-wild; includes store bought yeast, kombucha, yogurt, cultures off the internet, etc.)
Culinary tweezers or tongs
Rocks to weigh things down
Your favorite vegetables

Credit Equivalencies:

2 credits in Food Justice

2 credits in Food Preservation

Criteria for Earning Credit:

The criteria for earning credit are outlined in full in our shared Learning Agreement document. Students are responsible for knowing all requirements for credit and keeping track of their progress in the program. Faculty will reach out no later than the third week to inform students at risk of not earning full credit.

Assignments

3 Discussion boards (your own post plus responses to classmates) that responds to the prompts on Canvas (300-word minimum posts)

Short final reflection paper that synthesizes your learning in this course (1 page minimum)

Weekly readings (see Canvas modules for weekly schedule)

At home fermentation projects: 1 ferment completed at home with documentation submitted on Canvas

Final video presentation about your ferments (5 minutes)

Learning Goals:

This course will support students in the following:

- Deepening their understanding of inequities and injustices in the food system, especially in regard to food waste.
- Expanding their analysis of movements for environmental and food justice.
- Develop hands-on skills and practice in fermentation.
- Strengthen communication skills through writing and final presentation projects.

Preparatory For: Culinary arts, restaurant businesses, food systems, agriculture, entrepreneurship, nonprofits, food justice activism

Land and Labor Acknowledgement:

We acknowledge that the United States has been built upon both stolen land and stolen labor. The stolen land includes that upon which we live and learn. The Olympia area was historically a center for trade and exchange among many Salish Sea tribes, including Chehalis, the Skokomish, and others. The Evergreen State College sits on territory ceded by the tribes of the Medicine Creek Treaty of 1854, which include the Squaxin Island Tribe, the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. If you are not in Olympia, and do not know the original inhabitants of the land where you reside, one resource to learn more is: <https://native-land.ca/>

We also acknowledge that the economy in which we work was built upon labor taken through the enslavement of indigenous and Black people. Even after the formal end of slavery, people of color have had freedom, time, knowledge, wealth, and work taken from them without compensation in ways that have laid the foundation for today's society. This includes the care work and labor of social reproduction by women, in particular Black women, that has long been taken for granted. We understand the necessity of linking action to these acknowledgements; hence, these acknowledgments serve as important steps in processes of Native land rematriation, reparations for Black people, as well as broader movements for social justice.