

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE
EYE 129 The Chicken Course
Fall 2013

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“Don’t try to convey your enthusiasm for chickens to anyone else.” (E.B. White, 1944)

In this course, we will ignore E.B. White’s advice in order to focus on Chicken--in our food system (as meat and eggs), as an object of policy and politics (bird flu, local zoning), and as cultural symbol and metaphor (in folklore, children’s stories and cockfighting)—and to convey our enthusiasm for the ubiquitous bird.

Overview of the Course

In the first part of the course, Chicken will be our tour guide as we explore their production for meat and eggs. Chicken will serve as a window into the dramatic changes in the food industry and in kitchen literacy over the past century.

Chickens are not only good to eat; they are also at the center of local and global political debates. At the local level, municipalities in Maine and elsewhere regulate the keeping of chickens as well as poultry and egg production through law and local ordinances. At the global level, bird flu and fear of contagion have generated a variety of national and international responses. In the second part of the course, Chicken will serve as a window on the intersection of policy and politics with science, epidemiology, and ecology.

Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss proposed that animals are not only good to eat, but also “good to think.” Cockfighting, while now illegal in all fifty US states, is nonetheless still practiced here and around the world. If roosters are the stars of cockfighting, hens are the stars of plenty of stories of their own, including “Chicken Little” (“The sky is falling..”) and the “Little Red Hen.” In the third part of the course, we will explore humans’ love affair with chickens in the realm of culture-- in sport and story--to examine what Chicken and our relationships to them have to say about us as humans.

EYE 129 and General Education

This course is part of USM's Core Curriculum and is thus informed by the University's Vision, Goals and Outcomes for general education. The Vision and Goals state that

General education at USM is a coherent, integrative and rigorous liberal education that will enable our graduates to be world-minded, intentional, life-long learners. General education engages the academic community in substantive learning experiences that both illuminate and transcend the perspectives of various disciplines, and systematically fosters the values and dispositions, knowledge, and skills essential for students to demonstrate

1. Informed understandings of interrelationships between human cultures and the natural world;
2. Analytical, contextual, and integrative thinking about complex issues;
3. Effective communication using multiple forms of expression;
4. Critical reflection upon, and informed action in, their roles as participants in multiple communities;
5. Ethical action to contribute to the social and environmental welfare of local and global communities.

As an Entry Year Experience, this course is designed to help you transition successfully to college in a rigorous academic context which emphasizes critical reading, thinking, and writing and high levels of interaction with faculty and other students.

Learning outcomes

Students who successfully complete EYE 129 will be able to describe, explain, analyze and evaluate, at an introductory level, orally and in writing, a variety of perspectives which position Chicken at the intersection of human cultures and the natural world.

Students will know

- How the production and consumption of chicken as food has changed in the US over the past century, and how these changes are related to the broader transformation of agriculture and food production
- That alternative methods of raising poultry exist alongside dominant, industrialized methods, and that each has advantages as well as disadvantages
- How the exercise of power at the local level and on a global scale can help solve, and create, problems related to animal welfare, the environment, diet, and public health
- That Chicken can be viewed through a variety of frames or lenses, and that each reveals something about us as members of a culture
- How individual experiences and choices are related to larger cultural and historical patterns

Students will be able to

- Describe some of the many ways that Chicken is the product of both culture and nature
- Locate and critically evaluate information relevant to answering a variety of kinds of questions
- Engage with a range of texts of different types (popular and scholarly; written and visual; in the sciences, social sciences, humanities and the arts)
- Use writing effectively as part of the process of learning, and for purposes of exploring ideas and for self-reflection
- Articulate, at a level appropriate for a first year college student, their own views and support those views with reasoning and evidence
- Communicate effectively by writing clearly and correctly and by engaging in meaningful and respectful dialogue
- Exhibit intellectual curiosity and a propensity to act on that curiosity by posing and exploring questions in relation to both familiar and unfamiliar topics
- Articulate, at an introductory level, points of connection between/among different courses and

between learning and experiences inside and outside of the classroom

Course Structure and Expectations

The course will combine lectures, discussion and guided conversation, collaborative exercises, and in-class and co-curricular activities, depending on the topic under discussion and the goals of the particular class period.

Your grade in the course will be based 600 points, distributed as follows:

Essays (3 x 100 points)	300 points
Focus Questions	100 points
Group project & co-curricular activities	100 points
Attendance, Preparation and Engagement	100 points

Grades will be determined by your mastery of the material, not by a curve. This means that it is possible for all students in the course to earn an A, if all students master the material at a very high level.

Reading. Reading and visual materials are at the core of this course. You should plan to read 20-30 pages in preparation for each class, with additional time for preparing written work, etc. A general rule for college classes is 2-3 hours of homework for every 1 hour in class.

Written Work. Writing is a valuable tool for thinking and learning. Not surprisingly, then, this course will require a substantial amount of writing. A relatively small amount of the total will be formal writing in which you will polish ideas and show us what you've learned. Most of it will be informal writing designed to help you develop and consolidate your understanding of the material and to help you shape your own ideas. Try to begin viewing writing as a part of the thinking process, rather than the outcome of that process.

Focus Questions play a central role in writing-to-think. In conjunction with most of the readings, you will be required to answer focus questions. Their purpose is to create a framework for reading carefully and thoroughly, and to provide an opportunity for thinking systematically, reflecting on the material prior to class, and for making connections between and among course material, other classes and events, and your own experience. You must prepare written (word-processed) answers to these questions; we will use your answers during class and papers will be collected at the end of class.. Answers to focus questions will be reviewed, recorded, and returned with minimal comment. Late papers will not be accepted for credit. We will not be grading each set separately, but will award a check (for satisfactory progress toward meeting learning outcomes), a check plus (for excellent progress), and a check minus (for incomplete or careless work or notable lack of progress toward learning outcomes). To earn full credit for focus questions (100 points), you must satisfactorily complete (i.e. get a check on) 12 (out of approximately 17) sets of questions.

We expect that all written work be word-processed/printed. If, on occasion, the choice is handwritten or not at all, however, we will accept handwritten papers PROVIDED that they are neatly written, in ink, on one side of the paper, with large margins, and without rough edges/"fringe."

In this course you will also write three formal **essays** in which you will use the course material to develop and defend an original conclusion/thesis. The writing process is organized so that you will draft your essay, engage in a structured peer review in class, and revise your essay before submitting it for a grade. Specific writing prompts will be distributed and discussed in class.

Class Attendance, Preparation and Engagement are required. You are expected to come to every class (on time) and to be an engaged and prepared participant. This semester, we will comprise a learning community; communities function best when members are consistently present and involved. **Attendance** is essential since we will use some of our class time to present material not available in readings, etc. and to help you see connections among the readings. **Preparation** means that we expect you to read and think about the readings and assignments before class begins; the focus questions are intended as part of this preparation. Given the interactive structure of the class, a lack of preparation on your part will have a negative effect on all of us. Preparation also involves being ready with research or materials (eg. children's book) when specified. **Engagement** refers to your participation in class discussion and to your involvement in and commitment to your own learning. We realize that not everyone will be equally vocal in class discussion, but everyone is expected to be an engaged participant in class discussions, in group work, and in their own learning.

Co-curricular activities involve extending your learning outside of the classroom and are a required component of all EYE classes. This semester we have organized two main co-curricular activities. Both are required. The first is a trip to the Cumberland Fair scheduled for the week of September 23. The second is the Campus Chickens group project.

“Campus Chickens” Group Project

What if...we were able to keep chickens on campus? What would be involved in getting permissions and securing funding, designing and building a coop, selecting breeds and buying birds, choosing feed, and keeping a flock safe and healthy? We will work in small groups throughout the semester to ask and answer these and other practical questions. Groups will be required to give a public presentation at the end of the semester. Details to follow.

Required Books

Steve Striffler. 2005. *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America's Favorite Food*. New Haven: Yale University Press. [Available at USM bookstore in Portland and Gorham]

Annie Potts. 2012. *Chicken*. London: Reaktion Books.

Diana Hacker. 2011. *A Writer's Reference*, 7th edition. Bedford/St. Martins. [Available at USM bookstore in Portland and Gorham. This is the same book required for ENG 100 and ENG 104; you do not need a second copy but will be using it for these, and other, courses.]

You must find and have to hand in November a hard copy of a children's book that features chicken. There are many different possibilities to borrow or buy. We will check that you have hard copy (not e-book) on 11/14.

Many of your course materials will be available electronically on the course Blackboard site. You will want to allocate money for printing articles or use a laptop so that you can have the articles available to you in class.

Blackboard

This course has a Blackboard site which contains course materials including many required readings. The quick guide will help you access materials, change your password, log in, change your e-mail address, etc. If you have activated your Maine Street account, you're all set; login and password are the same for Maine Street and Blackboard. If you have not yet activated Maine Street, you'll need to do that first. Instructions are online; you can navigate from the USM website, www.usm.maine.edu. If you have trouble activating or logging in to Blackboard, please do NOT call us for technical help. Use USM's Computing Helpdesk at 780-4029 or www.usm.maine.edu/helpdesk

Check in to Blackboard regularly (1-2 times/week) for announcements. In case of bad weather or other cancellation, check Blackboard for changes or updates; if no changes are posted, follow the syllabus. In addition, we will use the discussion feature to facilitate work on the group project and the communication function to send e-mails. Please ensure that the e-mail address in Blackboard is where you actually receive your mail.

Course Policies

E-mail. At USM, email is the official and primary means of communication. You can read the university's policy on email here: <http://www.usm.maine.edu/doit/email-communication-policy> Since it will also be an important way for us to communicate, please observe the following rules when you email the instructors:

- Messages must come from your USM (maine.edu) email address
- Messages must have a meaningful subject line that includes EYE (eg: EYE question about reading)
- Messages must be signed
- Consider email messages a form of professional communication. You are not texting a friend. Pay attention to your style and tone. Use proper spelling, capitalization, punctuation, and grammar.
- Pause and review before you hit send. Make sure that you cannot easily answer the question yourself by reviewing the syllabus or handouts, or by checking Blackboard.

We usually read and reply to emails in batches on weekdays at regular times (at start of workday, midday, and end of workday). You can expect a timely, but not necessarily immediate, response.

Electronic devices. Cell phones should be turned off and put away during class. Under extenuating circumstances, you may keep your phone on vibrate/silent mode but any calls must be taken outside of (and away from) the classroom. Laptops/tablets may be used for taking notes or accessing course materials; they may not be used for other purposes during class time.

Late Policy. We expect that you will hand in written work at the designated times. Graded work (eg. essays) will be penalized (2 points/day) for each day late (including weekends and non-class days), and will only be accepted for credit until the following class session. Focus questions must be handed in IN CLASS on the day they are due. Late focus questions will be reviewed to assess progress in meeting learning outcomes and to give you feedback, but will not earn full credit toward the focus question portion of your grade.

Academic Integrity.

The University's Academic Integrity policy reads, in part, "Academic integrity is based upon honesty. All students of the University are expected to be honest in their academic endeavors. All academic work should be performed in a manner which will provide an honest reflection of the knowledge and abilities of each student. Any breach of academic honesty should be regarded as a serious offense by all members of the academic community." Violations of this policy include cheating on exams, stealing words or ideas from others (plagiarism), making statements known to be false or misleading, improperly

using library materials or computer files, or altering or forging academic records. These and other violations are contrary to the educational purposes for which the University exists, and will result in disciplinary action. You can find more information here: <https://cms.usm.maine.edu/ocs/student-academic-integrity-policy-0> and on the course Blackboard site.

While we encourage you to share your ideas with classmates and others and to discuss material outside of class, all written work must be your own. Plagiarism in any shape or form will not be tolerated. This includes "borrowing" from friends and classmates as well as from published authors. We will discuss and practice in class proper procedures for referencing and citation. Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* is also an invaluable tool; see Section R3 (p. 341 ff.). Other resources related to plagiarism and correctly using source material are available on the library website: <http://usm.maine.libguides.com/content.php?pid=9387&sid=61728>. If you have questions about plagiarism, citations, or referencing, please ask any of your faculty.

Academic Support. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. The links for many academic supports are available here: <http://www.usm.maine.edu/success/academic> and here: <http://usm.maine.edu/learningcommons>

Other support services you might find useful include the Counseling Center (780-4050) and the Disability Services Center (242 Luther Bonney, Portland, 780-4706; www.usm.maine.edu/dsc). The "Campus Resources" tab in Blackboard includes links to these and other campus support services.

COURSE SCHEDULE

BB indicates materials or links available on Blackboard.

Schedule is tentative; changes will be announced in class and posted on Blackboard.

Date	Topic & class activities	Reading	Writing due
Tues 9/3	Welcome & Introduction		
PART I: CHICKEN AS FOOD: MEAT AND EGGS			
Thur 9/5	Patterns in Chicken Consumption -Cookbook activity	Boston Cooking School Cookbooks [BB] Striffler, Introduction	Focus questions
Tues 9/10	Producing Meat 1900-1950: Chicken becomes king	Striffler, Ch 1-2 Rec: Stull & Broadway, 36-51 [BB]	Focus questions
Thur 9/12	Industrialized chicken Video: Chicken of Tomorrow	Striffler, Ch 3-4	Focus questions
Tues 9/17	Workers and Work Conditions in Poultry Industry Video: selections from Geyrhalter, Our Daily Bread	Striffler, Ch 5-6	Focus questions
Thur 9/19	A Ripple Effect	Striffler, Ch 7	Focus questions
Tues 9/24	Changing Landscape of Egg Production	United Egg Producers, "American Egg Farming" [BB] Video: American Egg Board "Good Egg Project" [BB]	Focus questions
TBD	CUMBERLAND FAIR		Scavenger Hunt
Thur 9/26	Laying hens, animal welfare, & Decoster Egg	-Kristof, "Is an Egg for Breakfast Worth This?" [BB] -Mercy for Animals, "Decoster Animal Factories" [BB] -Fassler, "Timeline of Shame" [BB] -Compassion over Killing, "Animal Suffering in the Egg Industry" [BB]	Focus questions
Tues 10/1	Taking Action & Making Change	-Charles, "Coop D'Etat" [BB] -Greene & Cowan, "Table Egg Prod & Hen Welfare" [BB] Rec: Striffler, Ch 8	Focus questions
Thur 10/3	Role Play: Egg Farm Eggspanion	Potts, Ch 6	Focus questions
Tues 10/8	Writing Workshop/Peer review	No new reading	Draft of Essay 1

PART II: POULTRY POLITICS AND POLICY

Thur 10/10	The Backyard Hen: Everything old is new again?	-Kingsolver, "Lily's Chickens" [BB] -McNally, "Fine Fowl" [BB] -Guest speaker	Focus questions
Tues 10/15	No Class: October Break		
Thur 10/17	Keeping & regulating small flocks Video: from Natural History of Chicken	City of Milwaukee ordinance 2 additional laws/ordinances	Essay 1 (revised) Due
Tues 10/22	Zoning and municipal ordinances Activity: draft an ordinance	No new reading	
Thur 10/24	Not in my backyard: regulating industrial production	Striffler, Chapter 8	Focus questions
Tues 10/29	H5N1 Virus, aka Avian flu	Greger, Bird Flu: A virus of our own hatching (Ch 4-5) [BB] Rec: M. Nestle, Safe Food	Focus questions
Thur 10/31	Video: "Building the Perfect Bug"	No new reading	
Tues 11/5	Writing Workshop/Peer Review	No new reading	Draft of Essay 2

PART III: CHICKENS AS SYMBOLS: STORY AND SPORT

Thur 11/7	Chickenlore	Potts, Ch 3	Focus questions
Tues 11/12	A Love Affair with Chickens Video: selections from Natural History of the Chicken	Potts, Ch 4	Revised Essay 2
Thur 11/14	Love Affair with Chickens	-one of the following selections from Walker, Gurdon, Danaan, White, MacDonald, Goldhammer	*Bring children's book to class
Tues 11/19	Multifarious and contradictory Chicken	-Arluke & Sanders, "The Sociozoologic Scale" [BB]	Focus questions
Thur 11/21	Telling Stories In-class activity	Chicken Little Potts, Ch 5	Focus questions *Bring children's book to class
Tues 11/26	Cockfighting Video: Cockfight	Find/read position statements from PETA, HSUS, or other major animal welfare org	
Thur 11/28	No Class: Thanksgiving		
Tues 12/3	Cockfighting	Geertz, "Notes from a Balinese Cockfight" [BB]	Focus questions

Thur 12/5	Cockfighting	Bilger, “Enter the Chicken” [BB]	Focus questions
Tues 12/10	Conclusions	Potts, Epilogue (pp. 175-185)	Campus Chickens presentation
Thur 12/12	Writing workshop & peer review	No new reading	Draft Essay 3
	Final Exam Week		Essay 3 (revised) due by 10 am on Thur 12/19

COURSE SCHEDULE

With full citations

9/3 Introduction

CHICKEN AS FOOD: Meat

9/5 Patterns in Chicken Consumption

Fannie Merritt Farmer. 1923. *Boston Cooking School Cookbook*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. “Chapter XVII: Poultry and Game” [BB]

Marion Cunningham. 1983. *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*, 12th edition. Pp. 228-263, Poultry and Game Birds. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. [BB]

Steve Striffler, 2005. “Introduction” in *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America’s Favorite Food*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

9/10 Producing Meat 1900-1950: Chicken Becomes King

Steve Striffler. 2005. Chapters 1-2 in *Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America’s Favorite Food*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Recommended: Donald D. Stull and Michael J. Broadway. 2004. “Chicken Little, Chicken Big: The Poultry Industry,” pp. 36-51 in *Slaughterhouse Blues*. CA: Wadsworth. [BB]

9/12 Industrialized Chicken

Striffler, Chapter 3-4.

Video: Chicken of Tomorrow: <http://www.archive.org/details/Chicken1948>

9/17 Workers and Work Conditions in Poultry Industry

Striffler, Chapters 5-6

Video: selections from Nikolaus Geyrhalter, *Our Daily Bread* (2005)

9/19 Transformation of Chicken: A Ripple Effect

Striffler, Chapter 7

CHICKEN AS FOOD: Laying Hens and Egg Production

9/24 Changing landscape of egg production

United Egg Producers. “American Egg Farming.” [BB] Available at

http://www.unitedegg.org/information/pdf/American_Egg_Farming.pdf

Video: American Egg Board. “The Good Egg Project.” [BB] Scroll down to watch the 3 short videos (Klempf, Henhouse; Satrum, Cage Free; and Benson, Enriched Colony). Available at <http://educationstation.discoveryeducation.com/>

9/26 Laying Hens, Animal Welfare, and Decoster

Nicholas Kristof. 2012. "Is an Egg for Breakfast Worth This?" New York Times. April 12, 2012. [BB]

Mercy for Animals. "Decoster Animal Factories." [BB] Available at <http://www.mercyforanimals.org/maine-eggs/decosterhistory.pdf>

Joe Fassler. 2010. "Timeline of Shame: Decades of Decoster Egg Factory Violations." The Atlantic, September 16, 2010. [BB]

Compassion Over Killing. "Animal Suffering in the Egg Industry." [BB] Available at <http://www.cok.net/images/pdf/COKLayerReport.pdf>

10/1 Taking Action & Making Changes

Dan Charles. 2012. "Coop D'Etat: Farmers, Humane Society Partner on Chicken-Cage Revolution." National Public Radio/All Things Considered. Aired 1/27/2012 [BB]

Joel L. Greene and Tadlock Cowan. 2012. "Table Egg Production and Hen Welfare: The UEP-HSUS Agreement and HR 3798." Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report to Congress. May 14, 2012. [BB]

Recommended:

Stull and Broadway. 2004. "Not in My Backyard" and "Food for Thought" pp. 133-159 in *Slaughterhouse Blues*. CA: Wadsworth. [BB]

10/3 Role Play: Egg Farm Eggspanion

Annie Potts. 2012. Chapter 6 in *Chicken*. London: Reaktion Books.

10/8 Writing Workshop/Peer Review

Draft of Essay 1 due

POULTRY, POLITICS, AND POLICY

10/10 The backyard hen: everything old is new again

Barbara Kingsolver. 2002. "Lily's Chickens." Pp. 108-130 in *Small Wonder*. NY: Harper Collins. [BB]

Jake McNally. 2012. "Fine Fowl: The Chickens Come Home to Roost on Munjoy Hill." *Munjoy Hill Observer* 32(6). July 2012. [BB]

10/15 No Class: October break

10/17 Keeping & regulating small flocks

ESSAY 1 (revised) DUE

City of Milwaukee, chicken ordinance [BB]

Find, read, and bring to class laws and/or ordinances regulating chicken keeping from two locations. One must be from Maine, the other should be outside of Maine.

The following link will get you started: <http://www.backyardchickens.com/atype/3/Laws/tag/64470/>

Video: selection from The Natural History of Chicken

10/22 Zoning and municipal ordinances

No new reading

10/24 Not in my backyard: Regulating industrial production

Striffler, Chapter 8

10/29 H5Ni Virus, aka Avian Flu, aka Bird Flu

Michael Greger. 2006. Selections from *Bird Flu: A Virus of our own Hatching*.

Lantern Books. [BB] Available at birdflubook.com

Recommended. Marion Nestle. 2003. *Safe Food: Bacteria, Biotechnology and Bioterrorism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

10/31 Bird Flu

Video: "Building the Perfect Bug"

11/5 Writing Workshop & Peer review

Draft of Essay 2 due

CHICKEN: SYMBOLS, STORY, AND SPORT

11/7 Chickenlore

Annie Potts. 2012. Chapter 3 in *Chicken*. London: Reaktion Books.

11/12 A Love Affair with Chickens

ESSAY 2 (revised) DUE

Video: selections from Natural History of the Chicken

Annie Potts. 2012. Chapter 4 in *Chicken*. London: Reaktion Books.

11/14 A Love Affair with Chickens

Bring children's book to class

One of the following (all are on Blackboard):

Alice Walker. 2011. *The Chicken Chronicles*. New York: New Press.

Martin Gurdon. 2005. *Hen and the Art of Chicken Maintenance*. CT: Lyons Press.

Clea Danaan. 2011. *The Way of the Hen: Zen and the Art of Raising Chickens*.

CT: Lyons Press.

E. B. White. 1944. "Introduction" to *A Basic Chicken Guide* by Roy E. Jones

NY: William Morrow and Company.

Betty MacDonald. 1987 [original 1945]. *The Egg and I*. NY: Harper Perennial.

Catherine Goldhammer. 2007. *Still Life with Chickens*. NY: Plume.

11/19 Multifarious and Contradictory Chicken

Arnold Arluke and Clint Sanders. 1996. "The Sociozoologic Scale" Pp. 167-186 in *Regarding Animals*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press. [BB]

11/21 Telling Stories: Chicken Little

Bring children's book to class

Annie Potts. 2012. Chapter 5 in *Chicken*. London: Reaktion Books.

11/26 Cockfighting

Find and read position statements on cockfighting from PETA, HSUS, or other major animal welfare organizations.

Video: Cockfight

11/28 No Class: Happy Thanksgiving

12/3 Cockfighting

Clifford Geertz. 1973. "Notes from Balinese Cockfight" in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books. [BB]

12/5 Cockfighting

Burkhard Bilger. 2000. "Enter the Chicken." Pp. 29-61 in *Noodling for Flatheads*. New York: Scribner. [BB]

DRAWING CONCLUSIONS: What do chickens say about us?

12/10 Conclusions

Annie Potts. 2012. Epilogue (pp. 175-185) in *Chicken*. London: Reaktion Books.

12/12 Writing Workshop and Peer Review

Draft of Essay 3 due

ESSAY 3 (Revised) DUE by 10 am on Thursday 12/19