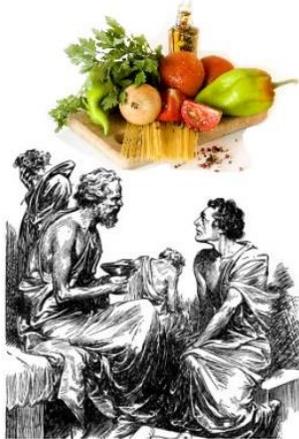


## YUM4931 – Cooking in the Socratic Method



Section R2D2

Fall 2014

Monday 1:30PM – 3:00PM

Thursday 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

1-800-IM-INJURED Teaching Kitchen Facility, UWT Main Campus, Topeka  
Gen Ed: BS, I

**Instructor:** Eliot Lavoie, A.A., FWS\*, CSC\*\*

**Office Hours:** MWF 1:00PM-1:30PM (excluding French national holidays)

**Room:** Office 7-C, Building 11 Hall

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According to TheFreeDictionary.com, the Socratic method is “a pedagogical technique in which a teacher does not give information directly but instead asks a series of questions, with the result that the student comes either to the desired knowledge by answering the questions or to a deeper awareness of the limits of knowledge.” It is with this framework in mind that we shall learn the basics of cooking.

This course will be like no other you have ever taken. I will not tell you what to do or how to think. Through trial and error and by exploring the limits of your own knowledge and experiences, you will learn how to handle yourself in the merciless world of the kitchen.

### **Prerequisites**

While courses such as “Food Safety” and “Basic Principles of Food Preparation” would provide an advantage for students entering a course such as this one, no prior experience is expected, nor required. Indeed, we will be learning plenty throughout the term.

### **General Education**

This course fulfills two different general education requirements: Basic Skills (BS) and International (I). The basic skills requirement is met (ideally) by learning how to cook; feeding oneself is fundamental for living. Similarly, the international designation is earned in two ways: first, my being French, and second, because other countries will be mentioned at various times throughout the course.

## Course Mechanics

Rather than copying a set of detailed instructions on how to cook, you will learn for yourself, with the instructor serving as a facilitator. At the start of a class session, students will stock each cooking station with ingredients necessary to cook dishes under the theme of that meeting. I will begin by asking the members of the class if they have any ideas for dishes. I will then respond with one or more questions highlighting the potential challenges or promise of an idea (sometimes both) without explicitly passing judgment. It will then be up to each student to attempt to produce a dish of his or her own. I will circulate throughout the room during this time to observe progress and respond to questions that may arise during the cooking process. In keeping faithful to the expectations of the course, responses to questions will be in the form of more questions. Ultimately, the goal is to produce an edible, appealing dish through self-actualization and minimal instructor involvement. (Please note that I have many students and questions to respond to and may not be able to address any particular question immediately. If I am unable to address your question before your dish expires, please feel free to start again with new ingredients.)

- **Lab Fees**

Due to the nature of this course, it is quite possible that you will need multiple attempts to successfully cook a dish. Obviously, depending on the ingredients used, this can become quite expensive. As this outcome is expected and even desired, I suggest that students account for these expenditures in their personal financial budgets for the duration of the semester. Anticipate extra outlay during weeks six (filet mignon) and twelve (saffron), in particular.

## Required Reading:

Child, Julia. Mastering the Art of French Cooking. 12th ed. Vol. 2. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1979. Print.

Chipperfield, Mark. "Gordon Ramsay's Swearing Prompts Tighter TV Controls in Australia." Telegraph.co.uk. 20 June 2008.

Machiavelli, Niccolo. The Prince, translated by N.H. Thomson. Vol. XXXVI, Part 1. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14

## Student Learning Outcomes

Students will determine, for themselves, what they anticipate learning from the course. The instructor is but a lowly guide in each pupil's lifelong odyssey for knowledge.

## Grades

Success in this course transcends the traditional A-F grading scale and numerical averages based on exams and assignments. The skills you will learn and the things you will discover about yourself and the world around you are much too intrinsically valuable to be quantified. Unfortunately, due to the fact that our educational system relies greatly on this numerical quantification, you will have several assignments and exams that will help provide it.

**Attendance:** Attendance and participation is the most important factor in determining your success in class and also the most meaningful of the components that make up your grade. One random class will be chosen and all students will sign an attendance sheet. Those present will receive full credit; those absent will receive no points and have no opportunity to make them up. This amounts to 3% of your final grade.

**Two exams, worth 35% each:** The **first** is a quote identification exam featuring excerpts from Julia Child's Mastering the Art of French Cooking and Niccolo Machiavelli's The Prince. You will need to be able to identify the source text (Child or Machiavelli) of each excerpt – this is more difficult than it sounds – and fill in missing words that I have chosen to redact. This will be given in the third or fourth week of class. The **second exam** concerns herb identification and will take the form of a slightly late midterm. You will be required to perform a blind taste test of a number of different common and suggested kitchen herbs and be able to correctly identify them. (Please note that individuals with food allergies must take the same exam as everyone else, as altering the exam content by removing specifically selected herbs creates an unfair advantage.)

**Execution and Taste of Dishes:** 20% of your grade will be subjectively determined by your instructor based on the execution and taste of the dishes you cook throughout the semester. Special consideration will be paid to effort and gains in personal knowledge.

**Random Assignments and Busywork:** Per university regulations, I am required to assign several assignments requiring minimum effort to engage students outside of class. I will assign these projects as I think of them, and their completion will be worth 7% of your grade.

**Visitors:**

Due to space considerations and insurance guidelines, access to class meetings by visitors is tightly controlled. Guests must be sponsored by a student enrolled in the course and must purchase a nontransferable day visitor's pass from the instructor upon entry to the classroom for a cash fee of \$25. Visitors may not taste food due to national security concerns.

**Contacting Your Instructor**

Your instructor is a busy professional. While he cares, to some extent, about students doing well in the class, be under no illusions that teaching is *not* how he makes his living. Should you wish to meet with him, the hours of his potential presence in his university-assigned office are listed at the top of this syllabus. They are subject to change without notice. In addition, students should note that this is a *shared* office. Should you knock on the door frame and see either a thin, white woman with glasses or an aged African-African gentleman, you are free to share with them your concerns about the class, but be aware that neither of these individuals is your instructor. Furthermore, nothing said to these professors regarding my class will be relayed to me because they are under the impression that I do not speak English (I detest small talk). In summary, the best way to contact me is to call, text, or email me using the information listed or to simply ask in the first or last five minutes of class.

**Academic Honesty:**

Cheating is NOT tolerated at the University of Western Topeka. Cheating is defined in the University Handbook, and it is the student's responsibility to be familiar with its many forms, including plagiarism and the consequences if you are caught cheating. As a result of completing registration at the University of Western Topeka, every student has agreed to the following statement: "I understand that the University of Florida expects its students to be honest in all their academic work. I agree to adhere to this commitment to academic honesty and understand that my failure to comply with this commitment may result in disciplinary action up to and including expulsion from the University."

**Course Evaluations**

Toward the end of this course, the university will contact you asking for feedback and comments on my class. Please feel free to ignore it, as I do not bother to read any responses. My style of teaching is based on months of experience and I will not change it based on the views of a smattering of know-nothing undergraduates. If there is ever another professor at this institution who can teach a course like mine, students may elect to take it with them instead.

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\*French Wine Scholar

\*\*Certified Sous Chef