

# Food is the Solution

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A study of herbal, critical, and conscious eating  
by Meghan O'Kelley

# ILC Summary

The student will explore herbal medicine and healing through food by reading, writing, watching films and documentaries, and classroom experience. The student will embark on field explorations of local forests, the Organic Farm, and various eating establishments and kitchens. The student will also research, form a definition of, and develop a practice of conscious eating. The student will write weekly entries on their wordpress site summarizing their work. Additionally, the student will present the current state of their project to the class at intervals throughout the quarter.

# What is critical/conscious/herbal eating?

Found on my blog [here](#).

“Critical and conscious eating is the practice of engaging with one’s food throughout the process that brings it to and through one’s body; from the nutritional value of the diet of the cow whose meat one eats to the physical sensation of digestion, conscious eating examines the relationship between that which is eaten and that which is felt. It is about experiencing agency over one’s physical health through the decisions one makes concerning food. For the purposes of this ILC, conscious eating also incorporates the consumption of herbs used for healing into one’s diet preventatively rather than through supplements or other means after the fact.”

# The Learning Goals

Through an ILC

Can be found [here](#).

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# Learning Objective #1

What is it?

To attend classes each Tuesday and engage in food tastings, presentations of work, readings, and seminar.

Did I do it?

Yes! As shown [here](#) through my weekly seminar papers.

# Learning Objective #2

What is it?

To learn the history of natural medicine in the Pacific Northwest region, through the books Northwest Foraging by Doug Benoliel, and Medicinal Herbalism by David Hoffman. What plants are native to this region? How did and do the people in this region interact with local plants to heal and develop medical practice?

Did I do it?

Yes! I read about this subject but ultimately found it wasn't my specific area of interest, so this didn't become a large part of my writing.

# Learning Objective #3

What is it?

To facilitate and work towards the rehabilitation of Evergreen's herb garden on the Organic Farm, facilitated by the book Spirit of the Elizabethan Garden by Elisabeth Woodhouse. How can the herb garden be rehabilitated? How can soil be enriched? How can traditional Elizabethan herb garden practices be adapted to include indigenous plant species and meet the needs of the Evergreen community?

Did I do it?

This particular objective has shifted to be my focus next quarter as the herb garden was largely untenable during the winter months.

# Learning Objective #4

What is it?

To construct herbal remedies and tinctures based on accumulated knowledge of herbalism and naturopathy through reading and experience, based on Plants of the Pacific Northwest Coast by Jim Pojar and Andy MacKinnon and Making Plant Medicine by Richo Cech. How can herbs and natural medicine be used to heal physical and psychological ailments and unite communities?

Did I do it?

Yes! As seen here and here, I used my learning to experiment with health effects on myself and treat day-to-day issues such as colds, dry skin, and sugar cravings. I incorporated the community aspect by bringing my use of herbs to my friends and family in our diets and medical practice.



# Learning Objective #5

What is it?

To discover, evaluate, and compile texts referenced in Kyla Wazana Tompkins' Racial Indigestion using my status as a program aide to provide a reference library for other students in my program.

Did I do it?

For a time, yes! As seen in my log, I did spend some time compiling course texts. However, I didn't have as much time as I anticipated to work on this project so it only ended up being a part of what I worked on early in the quarter.

# Learning Objective #6

What is it?

To research, define, and develop a practice of conscious eating.

Did I do it?

Yes! This became my primary focus as seen through my last few blog entries.

# Log

The hours I spent on my ILC

Found [here](#).

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# Really, though...How much did you do?

Apparently, 368 hours.

# What Did You Write?

My snappiest quotes

“Easy reading is damn hard writing.”

-Nathaniel Hawthorne

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# Highlights

“What is unknowable is always gendered, and it is usually feminine. The sea is a “she”. Why not space? Why not the void?”

“I wonder what it is about our culture (as Americans and more broadly as humans) that teaches us that the feeling of hunger is dangerous and bad. Obviously we are heavily consumerist and self-rewarding, but it seems to run deeper – almost an adaptive evolutionary sense that if we don’t eat right now we may not eat again. I try to be compassionate to that part of my brain and remind it that it’s okay, there will be food the next place I go so I don’t have to eat until I’m totally full or feel sick right now.”

“Through our dissociation of the labor and location of food from the experiences we draw from it, we have caused an increase in obesity, poor manners, and family conflict. As soon as the hearth becomes separate from the home, the value of food is overwritten and forgotten, and the people who make it (generally women, and especially women of color) experience the same neglect.”

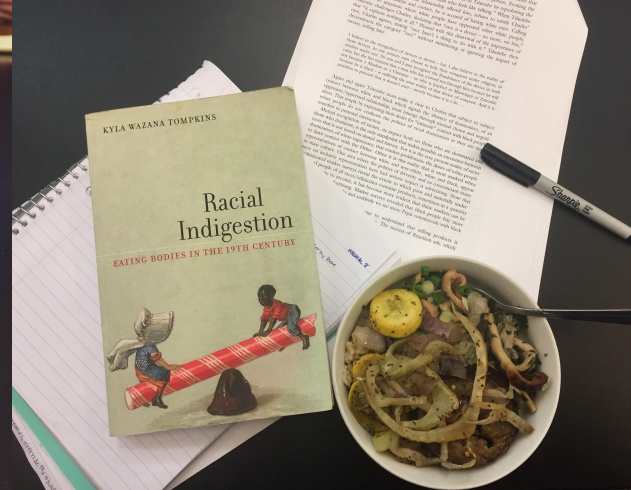
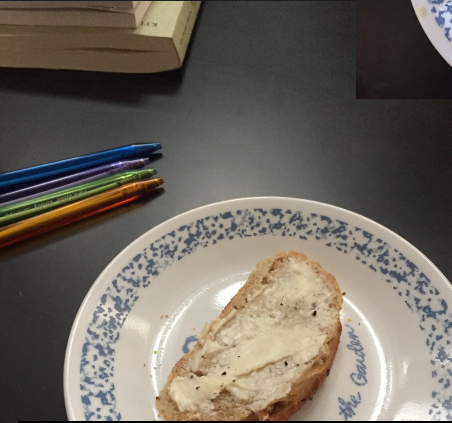
# Images

The colorful instagram of a food  
studies scholar

Found [here](#).

Or through my blog [here](#).





Best images from the quarter (aka some shameless self-promo)(follow me on instagram [@meghanokelley](https://www.instagram.com/meghanokelley))



# The Future

Spring Quarter

Discussed on my blog [here](#).



# Really, though...What are you doing this spring?

- Herb garden with Aurora & others
- Conscious eating brochure/newsletter
- Unspecified food studies, tbd in Washington D.C.
- Tea cheese???
- YouTube