



CUL-720: CATERING AND MOBILE FOOD SERVICES

Effective Term

Fall 2026

BOT Approval Date

12/11/2025

Discipline

CUL - Culinary Arts

Course Number

720

Course Title

Catering and Mobile Food Services

Short Title

Catering

Credit Status (CB 04)

D - Credit - Degree applicable

Units

Lecture Units

1.00

Lab Units

3.00

Total Units

4.00

Hours

Lecture Contact Hours

16-18

Out of Class Hours Lecture

32-36

Lab Contact Hours

144-162

Out of Class Hours Lab

0.00

Total Contact Hours

160 - 180

Total Out of Class Hours

32 - 36

Total Student Learning Hours

192 - 216

Is this an existing Extensive Lab?

No

Do you want to propose this for Extensive Lab?

Yes

Distance Education

No

Catalog Description

This course is a comprehensive and dynamic program, designed for those who want to master the art of catering and mobile food service management. Throughout this course, students will work as a team to fulfill catered and mobile food service events. Students will explore essential culinary techniques, menu planning, and food presentation skills, alongside the logistical aspects of running a successful catering business.

Requisites**Prerequisite(s)****Prerequisite(s) (must be taken before)**

CUL-500 (with a grade of C or better)

Codes**TOP Code (CB 03)**

1306.30* - *Culinary Arts

CIP Code

12.0503 - Culinary Arts/Chef Training.

Repeatability Code

No

Grading Option

Letter grade OR P/NP

Minimum Qualifications

Minimum Qualifications	And/Or
Culinary Arts/Food Technology	Or
Restaurant Management	End

Learning Objectives**Learning Objectives****Learning Objective**

1. Incorporate various culinary techniques relevant to large-scale food preparation and presentation.
2. Distinguish the key elements of managing a mobile foodservice operation, including vehicle maintenance, licensing, and health regulations.
3. Develop and implement customer service skills during foodservice operations.
4. Compose effective marketing strategies for promoting catering and mobile foodservice businesses.
5. Design and create diverse menus that reflect cultural inclusivity.
6. Assess catering operations to maximize profitability through cost control, pricing strategies, and workflow optimization.
7. Demonstrate knowledge of food safety principles, including proper sanitation practices, food handling, and storage techniques.
8. Create standard operating procedures (SOPs) for catering and mobile service events to standardize quality.
9. Evaluate supplier relationships and procurement processes to secure reliable, cost-effective ingredients.
10. Lead teams during high-volume service, including coordinating roles and timing.
11. Create a catering event plan that integrates client brief, menu design, budgeting, staffing, risk assessment, and post-event evaluation.

12. Elevate guest experiences by crafting proactive service procedures that are considerate of diverse customer needs.
13. Conduct weekly catered events, including MSJC meetings, public events, and other assignments, allocating a minimum of ten hours per week.
14. Fabricate a range of primal and sub-primal proteins to meet industry standards for catering production.
15. Prepare food live for guests at a buffet live-action station, showcasing interactive plating and engaging hospitality service.

Learning Outcome Information

Course Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome

1. Students will plan catering events, coordinating staffing requirements and equipment to meet operational needs.
2. Students will create diverse menus tailored for various events, considering dietary restrictions, seasonal ingredients, and budgeting.
3. Students will demonstrate customer service skills that create positive feedback with clients and guests in various catering and mobile foodservice settings.
4. Students will execute a range of dishes suitable for both casual and fine-dining catered service.

Content

Course Lecture Content

1. Introduction to Catering and Mobile Foodservice
 - a. Evolution and trends in the catering industry
 - b. Types of catering services
 - i. Corporate, social, weddings
 - c. The role of mobile foodservice in the culinary landscape
2. Menu Planning and Development
 - a. Menu design
 - i. Client needs
 - ii. Dietary restrictions
 - b. Balancing menus for various events
 - i. The importance of multicultural and fusion cuisines
 1. The economic impacts of developing a diverse clientele
 - c. Seasonal ingredients
 - d. Sustainability
3. Catering Operations Management
 - a. Effective leadership
 - b. Logistics
 - i. Staffing, equipment, transportation
 - c. Strategies for effective event planning and coordination
 - d. Contracts and client communication
4. Mobile Foodservice Essentials
 - a. Opportunities in mobile foodservice
 - b. Challenges in mobile foodservice
 - c. Permits, licenses, and health regulations
 - d. Equipment and vehicle considerations
5. Customer Service
 - a. Effective communication skills for client interaction
 - i. Inclusive language
 - ii. Effective listening
 - b. Techniques for managing client expectations
 - c. Strategies for enhancing guest experience during events
6. Cost Management and Budgeting
 - a. Food cost and pricing strategies
 - b. Inventory management and purchasing techniques
 - c. Budget proposals for catering events

7. Marketing and Promotion
 - a. Effective marketing
 - b. Branding strategies
 - i. Client acquisition and retention
 - c. Social media in promoting foodservice businesses
8. Case Studies and Industry Trends
 - a. Successful catering and mobile foodservice case studies
 - b. Current trends and innovations
 - c. Impact of technology

Course Lab Content

1. Introduction to Catering and Mobile Foodservice
 - a. Catering concepts
 - i. Types of catering services
 - ii. Health and safety regulations
 - b. Equipment and tool training
 - i. Kitchen equipment for catering
 1. Ovens, grills, and fryers
 2. Refrigeration and storage
 - ii. Mobile foodservice equipment
 1. Food trucks and trailers
 2. Portable cooking appliances
 3. Safety and maintenance of equipment
2. Menu Planning
 - a. Kitchen testing
 - i. Writing recipes
 - ii. Measurement testing
 - iii. Taste testing
 - b. Yield testing
 - c. Diversifying menus
 - i. Multicultural cuisines
 1. American, Latin American, European, African, Asian
 - ii. Fusion
3. Food Preparation Techniques
 - a. Butchery
 - i. Poultry
 - ii. Fish
 - iii. Meat sub-primals
 - b. Quantity cooking
 - i. Batch cooking
 - ii. Scaling recipes
 - iii. Organization for quality and safety
 - c. Buffet
 - i. Seated vs. passed
4. Preparing and Executing a Catered Menu
 - a. Mise en place
 - i. Efficient planning
 - b. Par-cooking
 - i. Efficient preparation
 - c. Cooking on-site
 - i. Portable equipment
 - d. Storing and transporting
 - i. Proper equipment
 - ii. Recording time and temperatures
 - e. Breakdown and clean-up
 - i. Cooling procedures
5. Food Preparation Techniques for Catering at Scale

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- a. Butchery and Butcher Subprimals
 - i. Primal breakdown, portioning, and fabrication for large-volume applications
 - ii. Safety considerations for high-volume meat handling.
 - b. Poultry, Fish, and Proteins
 - i. Advanced fabrication, portioning, and yield optimization
 - ii. Substitution strategies for dietary restrictions.
 - c. Quantity and Batch Cooking
 - i. Scaling from test kitchen to service-scale
 - ii. Batch preparation, energy management, and cross-utilization of ingredients.
 - d. Advanced Measurement and Yield Testing
 - i. Detailed methods for accurate scaling, yield calculations, and cost/profit implications.
 - e. Buffet and Service Formats
 - i. Design considerations for buffet lines, seating vs. passed hors d'oeuvres, and signage readability
 - ii. Flow optimization for multiple stations.
 - f. Organization for Quality and Safety
 - i. SOP development, mise en place strategies, station design for efficiency, and cross-training for reliability across teams.
 - g. On-Site Preparation and Logistics
 - i. Par-cooking, rapid assembly, portable equipment setup
 - ii. Assessment Milestones
 - 1. Practical lab assessment with a multi-dish on-site service; culminating yield and quality evaluation
 - 2. Team debrief and personal growth plan.
 - 6. Presentation and Service
 - a. Hot-holding food
 - i. Sous vide
 - ii. Steam tables and chaffing
 - b. Cold-holding food
 - i. Raw bar
 - c. Beverages
 - d. Action stations
 - i. Live preparation
 - ii. Live cooking
 - e. Design
 - i. Flow
 - ii. Focal point
 - iii. Table arrangements
 - f. Professional customer service
 - 7. Service review
 - a. Recipe review
 - i. Maintaining consistency
 - 1. Quality
 - 2. Yield
 - b. Client review
 - i. Measuring expectations vs. reality
 - 8. Catering Events
 - a. Overview
 - i. Planning full-scale catering events (e.g., campus event, community fundraiser, or corporate lunch)
 - ii. Concept to Client Brief
 - 1. Developing a client brief
 - 2. Presenting a formal proposal
 - iii. Production and Service Execution
 - 1. Executing the event with dedicated teams
 - 2. Applying standardized recipes
 - a. Portion control, quality assurance, and safety protocols
 - 3. Managing transport
 - a. Setup, service, and breakdown
 - iv. Service Evaluation

1. Professional Presentation
 - a. Post-event debriefing
 - i. Client feedback synthesis
 - b. Portfolios and Demonstrations
 - i. Concept brief, production plan, menu, photos, and reflections
 1. Presenting an oral or multimedia summary
 - c. Assessing Milestones
 - i. Concept clarity
 - ii. Execution quality
 - iii. Safety compliance
 - iv. Guest experience
 - v. Professional communication

Methods of Instruction

Method

Lab Activities

Integration

Students will train on all catering equipment, including large-quantity cooking and food transportation equipment. They will prepare and execute catering menus according to the instructor's direction. They will work as a team to produce recipes for kitchen testing and, eventually, event service. Students will have an opportunity to serve catered menus to clients in various settings. Activities will also include setting up buffets, interacting with customers, and event reconciliation.

Method

Lecture

Integration

The instructor will lecture on a variety of topics related to catering recipes, techniques, cultural cuisines, and methods. Lectures will include diverse instructional methods, such as discussions, presentations, videos, and demonstrations by the instructor. Topics will constructively build upon concepts from other courses within the program. Concepts specific to catering and mobile food service include menu planning and development, catering management, customer service, budgeting, marketing, and industry trends and technology.

Method

Observation and Demonstration

Integration

The instructor will demonstrate all recipes; students will observe the demonstration before producing the items on their own. The instructor will use this opportunity to demonstrate the recipe step-by-step and answer any questions that may arise. The instructor will explain and demonstrate methods for preparing, executing, and presenting a variety of items. The instructor will then observe the students' ability to interpret the demonstration. Replicated tasks are designed to produce equitable outcomes by measuring each individual's growth within their demonstration and application of concepts.

Methods of Evaluation

Method

Class Participation

Integration

At each class meeting, the instructor will lead the class in a discussion. Topics will include the menus for that week, methods, history, and ingredients. The discussion will also include the importance of these recipes in today's cuisines and how they may relate to different cultures. The instructor will evaluate the students through the use of the Participation Rubric. The rubric focuses on their punctuality, preparedness, and their participation in discussions, activities, and the content of the information they share.

Method

Class Performance

Integration

At each class meeting, students will be evaluated on how well they work in the kitchen and the final outcome of their recipes for that class. The instructor will evaluate how each student sets up their workstation and how sanitary they are. Students will present their dishes to the instructor for a critique, which will include the plate presentation, cooking method used, and seasoning. The instructor will evaluate each student's application of concepts through the use of the Performance Rubric. The rubric assesses the students' critical thinking by examining their ability to exhibit time management, problem-solving, professionalism, and quality production.

Method

Exams/Tests

Integration

Students will be assessed in formative weekly exams as well as two summative exams for the instructor to evaluate their progression of knowledge in catering and mobile food services. Exams will comprehensively assess a student's ability to critically interpret concepts, theories, and methods that were taught in the previous weeks. All exam questions are in an open-answer/essay format to best determine the student's interpretation of the material. Students will be evaluated on the accuracy of their answers, their ability to communicate their comprehension, and how they constructively connect new ideas with their personal experiences and pre-existing knowledge.

Method

Homework

Integration

Students will be assigned homework every week. Assignments will align with topics and recipes for the upcoming week. Evaluation will determine whether the work is complete, thorough, and demonstrates the student has spent time researching and answering the topic.

Method

Quizzes

Integration

Students will take a weekly quiz covering topics and information from the prior week. Topics include catering equipment, quantity cooking techniques, buffet presentations, and ethnocultural cooking methodologies. Quizzes are open-ended questions that require critical thinking and reflection to explicate an understanding of concepts. Assessment of quizzes includes determining whether a student can justify their answer and whether they can explain the why and how of a concept.

Method

Final Performance

Integration

Students will take a written final exam and a final practical exam. For the practical exam, students will produce a catering menu that covers many of the techniques taught in the class. Their final grade will be based on their recipe knowledge, sanitation, and the outcome of their final dishes. Evaluation will be based on presentation, execution of cooking methods, knife skills, seasoning, organization, timeliness, and sanitation.

Assignments**Assignment Type**

Reading

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

Read: "Catering: A Guide to Managing a Successful Business Operation" by Bruce Mattel
Focus on Chapters 1-3: Introduction to Catering, Business Types, and Market Trends.
Key Topics: Types of catering, understanding client needs, and identifying market opportunities.

This reading assignment aims to help you understand the fundamental concepts, trends, and operational practices in catering and mobile food services, enhancing your knowledge for practical applications in the culinary field.

Discussion Questions:

Prepare answers to the following questions:

What are the key differences between traditional catering and mobile food services?

How can understanding market trends enhance the success of a catering business?

What challenges do food trucks face regarding regulations and permits?

Assignment Type

Writing

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

You will create a detailed catering proposal for a specific event, including a menu, pricing strategy, and logistical considerations. This exercise will help you apply theoretical knowledge to practical catering and mobile food service industry scenarios.

Event Description:

Choose a type of event (e.g., wedding, corporate lunch, festival) and provide a brief description, including the date, location, number of guests, and any special requirements (e.g., dietary restrictions, theme).

Menu Development:

Create a three-course menu (appetizer, main course, dessert) that reflects the theme of your event. Include:

Dish Names: Creative and appealing titles for each dish.

Ingredients: A list of key ingredients for each dish.

Preparation Methods: Brief descriptions of how each dish will be prepared.

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Live Catering Event Simulation

In this simulation, you will apply culinary skills, teamwork, and organizational planning for a catering event, demonstrating your understanding of menu creation, food preparation, service, and client interaction.

In groups, you will plan and execute a mini catering event. Each group will be responsible for preparing and serving a designated menu to your classmates, simulating a live catering experience.

Form groups of 4-6 students. Each group will work together to plan and execute the catering event.

Each group will create a simple menu consisting of:

Appetizer: One cold or hot item.

Main Course: One dish that can be served in a buffet style.

Dessert: One easy-to-serve dessert.

Develop a detailed preparation plan that includes:

Ingredients List: A comprehensive list of all ingredients needed.

Preparation Steps: A timeline for when each dish will be prepared.

Equipment Needs: List all kitchen tools and equipment required.

During the in-class session, groups will:

Prepare the menu items, ensuring food safety and presentation standards.

Set up a serving area that reflects a professional catering environment.

Serve the dishes to classmates, explaining each dish and its ingredients.

Each group will practice client interaction by:

Presenting the menu to the class.

Answering questions about the dishes, including preparation methods and ingredient sourcing.

After the event, each group will complete a brief reflection (1-2 paragraphs) on what worked well, what challenges were faced, and how they could improve in future catering scenarios.

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

Outside of class

Formative or Summative

Summative

Assignment

Maintain a digital portfolio throughout the course. Portfolios are designed to offer each student a collective resource for their work from the course. Portfolios must include recipes, quizzes, writing assignments, reflections, and a glossary of all vocabulary words. They may also include other items such as course materials (PowerPoint, articles, videos), pictures, videos, and plate-up drawings.

Assignment Type

Other

In-class and/or outside of class

In-class

Formative or Summative

Formative

Assignment

For this assignment, you will create a menu that reflects diverse cultural backgrounds and dietary needs, fostering awareness and appreciation for different culinary traditions.

In small groups, you will collaborate to develop an inclusive catering menu for a hypothetical event that celebrates culinary diversity. Each group will present its menu and discuss how it promotes DEI in food service. Each group will select a theme for their event (e.g., multicultural festival, community potluck, or holiday celebration).

Research various cuisines and dietary preferences that align with the theme.

Consider:

Cultural significance of certain dishes.

Dietary restrictions (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, allergies).

Representation of underrepresented communities in the culinary world.

Create a menu that includes:

Appetizer: One dish from a specific culture.

Main Course: A main dish that incorporates diverse ingredients and flavors.

Dessert: A dessert that celebrates a different culinary tradition.

For each dish, include:

A brief description of its cultural background.

Information on how it accommodates dietary restrictions.

Any ethical sourcing considerations for ingredients.

Presentation:

Prepare a 5-minute presentation to share your menu with the class.

Include:

The chosen theme and its significance.

A discussion on the importance of DEI in the culinary field.

How your menu fosters inclusivity and celebrates diversity.

Submit a copy of the developed menu and any research notes used during the presentation.

Course Materials

Textbooks

Bruce Mattel (2016). Catering: A Guide to Managing a Successful Business Operation 2nd Ed. Wiley. ISBN: 9781118137970

Class Size Information

Class Size

16

Class Size Category

J - Specialty lab

Diversity and Inclusion

Course Design and Materials: Course will incorporate diverse perspectives, authors, and examples that reflect a variety of cultures, identities, and lived experiences. Instructional materials will be reviewed regularly to ensure representation, inclusivity, and alignment with equity-minded practices across disciplines.

Inclusive Learning Environment: Instructors will establish classroom norms and policies that promote respect, civil discourse, and belonging in both online and face-to-face classes. Clear expectations for communication and engagement will support a learning space where all students feel valued and heard.

Accessible Instruction: Course content will be delivered using accessible design. Materials will follow accessibility guidelines within the CMS, including captioned media, readable document formats, and multiple means of engagement to support diverse learning.

Equitable Teaching Practices: Instructors will use transparent and grading criteria, varied assessment methods, and timely feedback to promote fairness and student success. Opportunities for revision, reflection, and multiple demonstrations of learning may be incorporated when appropriate to the discipline.

Culturally Responsive Pedagogies: Instructional strategies will encourage critical thinking about diverse perspectives and systems of power relevant to the course content. Faculty will foster opportunities for students to connect course material to real-world contexts.

Ongoing Reflection and Improvement: Faculty will engage in continuous professional development related to IDEAA principles and reflect on course practices using metacognition to identify opportunities for increased equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Explain how diversity and inclusion(e.g., gender, culture/race, sexuality, etc.) is infused into the course.

The course is interactive and encourages students to embrace diverse viewpoints. Students make recipes that touch on cultures from around the world and are taught their significance and contributions to the discipline. Students work in teams and are encouraged to be creative among each other in the laboratory and during catered events. Each student's diverse viewpoint contributes to the team's overall makeup. Review for each lab includes all students sharing within a safe environment what they made and why.

Describe how assignments, instruction, evaluation, course content, and interactions are contextualized for diverse learners promoting an equitable course.

Students enter the course at various skill levels, so we begin from a contextualized starting point. The course is designed to start everyone at the most fundamental concepts, and as it progresses, student progression will vary. In the laboratory, students are assessed each week on their personal improvement week over week. In lecture, students are given instruction through various means: discussion, presentations, demonstrations, videos, and readings. Students are assessed on these materials through personal critical understanding and reflection, making each assessment unique to each individual.

Interactions**Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-student interaction.**

Students work in teams of three or four to meet daily objectives: prepare and serve catering menus, maintain food safety, and maintain a clean work environment. Students are also given leadership roles and must delegate tasks such as setting up equipment, gathering products, and cleaning duties.

Explain how the course will incorporate instructor-to-student interaction.

Every student gets one-on-one instruction while in the laboratory and during catered events. Techniques and methods are demonstrated to the class, as well as to groups and individuals as needed. The instructor delivers feedback during practical assessment to each group, student, and the class. For lectures, students get individual feedback on assignments.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-content interaction.

Students must come to class prepared, meaning they have reviewed the material and created materials needed to complete tasks. Materials include hand-written recipe cards, production sheets, and requisition sheets.

Explain how the course will incorporate student-to-self interaction (metacognitive).

During assessment, reflection occurs as a class, as a group, and as individuals. Students self-assess in their weekly review what was successful, what was not successful, and what they may do differently going forward.

Key: 3162