

Students take in cuisine history

September 29, 2014 12:30 PM Greg Thomson
newwave@tulane.edu



Students in the TIDES course, Cocktails, Cajuns and Creoles: Myths and Realities of New Orleans Food and Drink, will take a field trip to the French Quarter for a gumbo tasting toward the end of the semester. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

New Orleans cuisine is known worldwide for its spice and comfort. Now, Tulane University students are learning the history behind the local culture's influence on food in a course titled Cocktails, Cajuns and Creoles: Myths and Realities of New Orleans Food and Drink.

It is one of the [Tulane InterDisciplinary Experience Seminar \(TIDES\)](#) one-credit courses designed for first-year students. There are 74 different TIDES subjects this

fall semester and 110 sections of TIDES classes.

“We do a lot of tasting and talking while exploring the roots of some traditional Louisiana cuisine,” said [Amy George-Hirons](#), course instructor. “I do most of the cooking myself, while using primarily local ingredients.”

While exploring the culinary culture of New Orleans during the semester, students record their findings in a food diary. The goal is to document the ambiance of different restaurants in the city, menu options and descriptions of the foods consumed.

“We have a field trip to the Gumbo Shop for a gumbo tasting toward the end of the semester,” George-Hirons said. “We do a field trip to the Crescent City Farmers Market mid-semester to discuss the importance of local food systems as well.”

In October, students will embark on their third and final field trip. The group will visit the Old New Orleans Rum Distillery to explore the process of local rum production.

Through this course, first-year students also are being served a side of history. They will learn how Cajun and Creole cuisine became synonymous with New Orleans. They also are feasting upon several readings about the anthropological and sociological studies of food in Louisiana.

“I hope that students leave this class with a willingness and desire to leave campus and explore all of the opportunities that the city presents to them, but also that they really think about what they are experiencing â?¡ I want these students to be willing to put themselves out there and try something they’ve never tried before,” George-Hirons said.

Greg Thomson is a senior at Tulane University majoring in communication.

“We do a lot of tasting and talking while exploring the roots of some traditional Louisiana cuisine.”—Amy George-Hirons, course instructor