

The theme for this episode, the study of food within the humanities, was serendipitous. Two of my former students, Consuelo Salas and Joshua I. Lopez, were spending the Christmas holidays in El Paso visiting their families. I reached out to them and invited them to be my guests to discuss the impact that food studies has had in their personal and professional lives and how it has influence their views of El Paso's food landscape.

I first met Consuelo Salas when she took a required course to obtain a BA in American Literature, "Introduction to Literary Studies." This course introduced students to a number of literary theories through the lens of food. I still remember her skepticism that this process would be possible. She overcame such skepticism to the point that she moved on to get a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition with a focus on the visual rhetorics of food. She is now an Assistant Professor in writing studies at Charleston North Carolina, where she teaches through the lens of food.

I first met Joshua I. Lopez when I gave a lecture to an undergraduate course in Cultural Anthropology that he was taking. I spoke about how food is a system of communication. Joshua was intrigued by this idea; once he entered the Master's program in American Literature, he took a number of classes with me and in the process leaned to understand the number of ways people speak through the language of food. He explored in a number of class projects, including one that created a virtual Afro-Latino Foodways Museum, how the senses and memory are crucial to how food is a tool of communication. While completing his Master's and later teaching classes at El Paso Community College, Joshua designed assignments to help numerous El Paso residents understand the voice of food. Now, as a doctoral student of Food History at the University of North Texas, he focuses his research on gathering food oral stories and understanding the impact of "food voice" in people' everyday life.