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Olivia Terenzio

Class of 2020, M.A. in Southern Studies

Photographs by Andrea Morales, Southern Documentary Project



SOCIAL DISTANCE PORTRAITS WITH 2020 SOUTHERN STUDIES GRADUATES

OLIVIA TERENZIO

OLIVIA TERENZIO

Class of 2020

M.A. in Southern Studies

Writer and food scholar

A Mississippi native, Olivia returned to her home state to pursue an M.A. in Southern Studies. She previously earned a B.S. from Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism and spent a decade in San Francisco, where she worked on the editorial team at Williams-Sonoma and led restaurant content at OpenTable. She has also written about food and travel for national publications, covering grape and olive harvests in Tuscany and the Brazilian coffee industry.



Her thesis “Feijoada and Hoppin’ John: Foodways, Collective Identity, and Belonging in Brazil and the American South,” was a natural extension of her journalism background. The work compares two African-derived dishes – feijoada in Brazil, and Hoppin’ John in the United States – and how each has been used to construct national, ethnic, and regional identity narratives within these two societies of the Americas.



a thought from you. What's something that kept you grounded enough during this time to be able to finish your thesis and defend?

Delivered

Hey! Hmm good question. I feel a little bit like I'm cheating because I really finished pre-pandemic, so I'm not sure if I would have had the same experience working in the current climate. But for me, there is some comfort in just putting your head down and doing the work, and (hopefully) getting into a flow. It's a semblance of control when everything feels uncertain 😊