

**Professor Amy Bentley**  
**Department of Nutrition, Food Studies and Public Health**  
**NYU Steinhardt School of Culture, Education and Human Development**

## **FOODGE.2191.002 and .001: Food and Culture**

Fall 2013

Wednesdays, 4:55 P.M. - 6:35 P.M. (Section 2)

EDUCATION BLDG. Room 1080

Thursdays, 4:55 P.M. – 6:35 P.M. (Section 1)

GCASL (238 Thompson St) Room 288

For appointments-call 212-998-5580 to schedule an appt. during office hours

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### **Course Description and Objectives**

In Food and Culture we will determine how people use food to define themselves as individuals, groups or whole societies. We will identify the meaning and significance of food in different cultures by exploring the way that ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and religion influence our food choices or preferences. Additionally, we will examine how culture is transmitted and preserved through food. Through reading scholarly articles, personal essays, book excerpts, newspaper articles and cookbooks we will explore the intricate relationship that people have with food.

We will look critically at the following questions: how can food have different meanings and uses for different people? How does food function both to foster community feeling and drive wedges among people? What are some prevailing academic theories that help us identify and understand more subtle meanings of food?

### **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course students should be able to:

1. Describe major academic theories about the relationship between food and identity.
2. Analyze how individual and collective identities are asserted and represented in the realm of food practices and in the media.
3. Compare and contrast processes of food-based identity as they have developed around nation, region, religion, race and ethnicity.
4. Identify and explain stereotypes and archetypes about another through their food.
5. Contrast insider and outsider modes of identity claims and assignment.

6. Explain why and how people fight over food, and why disgust is often gustatory.
7. Elaborate on the mutual constitution of the self and the other, along with the love, longing and disdain for the other's food.

### **Required Readings**

#### **Books:**

Counihan, C. and Esterik, P.V. (Eds.), *Food and Culture: A Reader* (Routledge, 1997) or 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2007. (**F&C**)

Counihan, C. *Food in the USA: A Reader* (Routledge, 2002). (**USA**)

Belasco, W. and Scranton, P. *Food Nations: Selling Taste in Consumer Societies* (Routledge, 2002). (**FN**)

#### **Additional articles- posted on NYU Classes (**NYUC**)**

\*\*\* All assigned readings are due on the day they appear on the syllabus. You are expected to read all articles, and be prepared to discuss them critically.

### **Course Schedule**

**September 4**

**September 5**

#### **Course Introduction**

Overview of Course

General thoughts on food, ethnicity and culture

**September 11**

**September 12**

#### **Theories of Food: Mentalism and Structuralism**

##### **Readings:**

Levi-Strauss, Claude, "The Culinary Triangle." (**F&C**)

Douglas, Mary, "Deciphering a Meal." (**F&C**)

Paz, Octavio, "Eroticism and Gastroscopy," Daedalus 101 (Fall 1972): (67-85). (**NYUC**)

Barthes, Roland, "Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption." (**F&C**)

**September 18**

**September 19**

#### **Theories of Food: Materialism**

##### **Readings:**

Harris, Marvin, The Abominable Pig. (**F&C**)  
Long, Lucy, "Culinary Tourism," Journal of Southern Folklore (1998)  
(**NYUC**), 55 (3) (1998), p 181-204.

**September 25**

**September 26**

**Food, Ethnicity and National Identity: Acculturation and Resistance**

Mintz, Sidney, "Eating American." (**USA**, 23-33)  
Gabaccia, Donna, "What Do We Eat?" (**USA**, 35-40).  
Levenstein, Harvey, "The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930," (**USA**, 75-90).  
Wilk, Richard, "Food and Nationalism: The Origins of 'Belizean Food.'" (**FN**), 67-91)  
Pilcher, Jeffrey, "Industrial Tortillas and Folkloric Pepsi: The Nutritional Consequences of Hybrid Cuisines in Mexico." (**FN**, 222-237)  
Appadurai, Arjun. "How to Make a National Cuisine." (**F&C**)

**October 2**

**October 3**

**Food and Gender**

**Readings:**

Allison, Anne, "Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch Box as Ideological State Apparatus." (**F&C**)  
DeVault, Marjorie, "Conflict and Deference." (**F&C**)  
Beoku-Betts, Josephine, "'We Got Our Way of Cooking Things': Women, Food, and Preservation of Cultural Identity Among the Gullah." (**USA**, 277-294)  
Parasecoli, Fabio, "Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinity in Men's Fitness Magazines." (**F&C**)  
Deutsch, Jonathan, "'Please Pass the Chicken Tits': Rethinking Men and Cooking at an Urban Firehouse." Food and Foodways 13, 1-2 (January-June 2005), (**NYUC**)

**October 9**

**October 10**

**Food and Religion/Race**

**Readings:**

Tuchman, Gaye and Levine, Harry, "New York Jews and Chinese Food: The Social Construction of an Ethnic Pattern." in Shortridge,

- B. & Shortridge, J., (Eds.) The Taste of American Place. Rowman & Littlefield, 1998, (163 - 186) (**NYUC**)
- Poe, Tracey, "The Origins of Soul Food in Black Urban Identity: Chicago, 1915-1947." (**USA**, 91-108)
- Bentley, Amy, "Islands of Serenity: Gender, Race, and Ordered Meals During World War II." (**USA**, 171-192)

**October 16**

**October 17**

### **Food and Socioeconomic Status**

#### Readings:

- Fitchen, Janet, "Hunger, Malnutrition, and Poverty in the Contemporary United States." (**NYUC**)
- Poppendieck, Janet, "Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality." (**F&C**)
- Deutsch, Tracey, "Untangling Alliances: Social Tensions Surrounding Independent Grocery Stores and the Rise of Mass Retailing." (**FN, 156-174**)
- Nabhan, Gary Paul, "Diabetes, Diet, and Native American Foraging Traditions." (**USA**, 231-237)
- Roseberry, William, "The Rise of Yuppie Coffees and the Reimagination of Class in the United States." (**USA**, 149-168)

**October 23**

**October 24**

### **Food, Memory, Nostalgia and Cookbooks**

#### Readings:

- De Silva, Cara. ed. In Memory's Kitchen: A Legacy from the Women of Terezin (New York: Jason Aronson, 1996), ix-xvi, xxv-5. (**NYUC**)
- Proust, Marcel- "Madeleine" excerpt (**NYUC**)
- Sutton, David. Remembrance of Repasts. Excerpt (**NYUC**)
- Berzok, Linda Murray, "My Mother's Recipes: The Diary of a Swedish American Daughter and Mother," In Inness, ed. Pilaf, Pizole and Pad Thai: American Women and Ethnic Food, University of Mass Press, 2001, pp 84-101, (**NYUC**)
- Siskind, Janet, "The Invention of Thanksgiving: A Ritual of American Nationality." (**USA**, 41-58)
- Ireland, Lynne, " The Compiled Cookbook as Foodways Autobiography," in M.O. Jones, B.Giuliano, &R.Krell (Eds.), Foodways and eating habits: Directions for research (pp.107-114) (**NYUC**)

<b>October 30</b>	
<b>October 31</b>	<b>No Class: Work on your research projects</b>
<b>November 6</b>	
<b>November 7</b>	<p><b><u>Food and Identity and Food as Cultural Icon</u></b></p> <p><u>Readings:</u></p> <p>Neustadt, Kathy, "Born among the Shells": The Quakers of Allen's Neck and Their Clambake." In Humphrey and Humphrey (Eds.) <u>"We Gather Together" Food and Festival in American Life</u> (pp.89-110) (<b>NYUC</b>)</p> <p>Lewis, George, "The Maine Lobster as Regional Icon: Competing Images Over Time and Social Class." In B. Shortridge and J. Shortridge (Eds.) <u>The taste of American Place</u>. Rowman and Littlefield: New York. (Pp. 65-84)(<b>NYUC</b>)</p> <p>Fischler, C. "Food, Self and Identity," <u>Anthropology of Food</u> (27), 2 (1988): 275-292. (<b>NYUC</b>)</p> <p>Penfold, Steve, "'Eddie Shack was no Tim Horton': Donuts and the Folklore of Mass Culture in Canada." (<b>FN</b>, 48-66)</p> <p>Weiner, Mark. "Consumer Culture and Participatory Democracy: The Story of Coca-Cola." (<b>USA</b>)</p>
<b>November 13</b>	
<b>November 14</b>	<p><b><u>Global Food Politics: Fast Food/Slow Food</u></b></p> <p>Counihan, Carole, "Bread as World." (<b>FC</b>)</p> <p>Heldke, Lisa, "let's Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism (<b>FC</b>)</p> <p>Allen, Keith, "Berlin in the Belle Epoque: A Fast-Food History." (<b>FN</b>, 240-267)</p> <p>Leitch, Alison, "Slow Food and the Politics of Pork Fat: Italian Food and European Identity." (<b>FC</b>)</p> <p>Yan, Tunxiang, "Of Hamburger and Social Space: Consuming McDonald's in Beijing." (<b>F&amp;C</b>)</p> <p><b>*** 5 Page rough draft of final paper due ***</b></p> <p>Try to make this draft as close to your final project as possible. Include a <u>thesis</u>, <u>rough chronology of ideas</u> and <u>concluding remarks</u>. Bring (2) copies of your draft - one to turn in to me, and one to share with a reading partner. We will spend 30 minutes in class, working in paired groups.</p>

<b>November 20</b>	
<b>November 21</b>	<b><u>Acceptable or Unacceptable Food: Food Avoidance and Food Aversion</u></b>
	<b>Readings:</b>
	Bynum, Caroline Walker, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh: The Significance of Food to Medieval Women." ( <b>F&amp;C</b> )
	Brumberg, Joan Jacobs, " "The Appetite of Voice" ( <b>F&amp;C</b> , 211-225)
	Bordo, Susan, "Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathy as the Crystallization of Culture." <b>F&amp;C</b> , 226-250)
	Bruch, Hilde, "Anorexia Nervosa and its Differential Diagnosis." ( <b>FC</b> )
<b>November 27</b>	
<b>November 28</b>	<b>NO CLASS- THANKSGIVING</b>
<b>December 4</b>	
<b>December 5</b>	<b><u>The Culture of Disgust</u></b>
	Schwabe, Calvin, W., <u>Unmentionable Cuisine</u> . Virginia: University Press of Virginia, 1979. Introduction, Chapter 4, 5, 6, and 20. (pp.1-10, 149-178,365-383) ( <b>NYUC</b> )
	Rozin, P. (1999). "Food is Fundamental, Fun, Frightening, and Far-Reaching." ( <b>NYUC</b> )
	Rozin, P., Haidt, J., & McCauley, C.R. (1993). "Disgust." ( <b>NYUC</b> )
<b>December 11</b>	<b>For Wed. class time/date TBD (This is a "Legislative Day" so Monday classes meet this Wed. Dec. 11)</b>
<b>December 12</b>	<b>Final Individual Presentations</b>
<b>December 18</b>	<b>6-7:50 P.M.</b>
<b>December 19</b>	<b>6-7:50 P.M.</b>
	<b>Final Individual Presentations (time changes to fit with finals time slot)</b>

**\*\*\* Papers Due in class on Thursday, December 19, 2013 \*\*\***

#### **Research Paper and Presentations**

An independent 15-20 page research paper of your choice, accompanied by an 8 minute oral presentation is the culminating project for Food and Culture. You may choose a topic that we are exploring in class, or an area of personal or academic interest. A brief list of the **types** of topics appropriate are:

- . Exploring a particular ethnic group's foodways.
- . Specific religious practices and food
- . Wonder Bread as an American phenomenon
- . An in depth study of a food event or festival
- . An ethnographic study of a soup kitchen
- . A literary analysis of food related novels or films
- . The sociological movement of vegans
- . Cultural identity through street food
- . Power and chefs
- . Cultural significance of medieval fasts and feasts
- . A study of a Korean family's acculturation and resistance through food
- . Technology's role in "Americanizing" an ethnic cuisine
- . Masculine meat, and feminine field greens

These topics are merely meant to give you an idea of the vast possibilities. Whatever topic you select, it must be original. By this, I mean that you may not select a topic that you are using, or have previously used for another class. Try to select a topic as soon as possible, and make an appointment to meet with me and discuss your ideas.

### **The Paper**

Please type, double space and staple your 15-20 page paper. Please use either 10 or 12 point font only. It must have a title that accurately defines your paper. **You must have a clearly stated thesis, and focus the entire paper around it.** Provide specific examples to support this thesis. Select other studies, or scholarly articles to use as models. For example, if you are doing a study on female roles in Ethiopian festival cooking, look for studies that also focus on gender roles or festival food preparations. It is important that you incorporate other academic studies into your project. I am not however, just looking for a related literature review. You must not just cite these projects, but frame them, or compare them to your study in some way.

I suggest beginning with a thorough search in the library, for any and all material related to your topic of interest. You may use Bobcat, or other ONLINE searches. The reference librarians at Bobst are extremely helpful. Do not be afraid to use other libraries as well. The research library at the NYPL is perhaps the finest in the world. Explore the Internet, newspaper articles, journals, live interviews, participate in an actual event or situation, or consult archives. All information is helpful. You must use at least ten scholarly references (journals or books). Additionally, you may use newspapers, popular magazines, cookbooks, trade publications, films, surveys, pamphlets, labels, etc. Strong research papers combine both primary and secondary sources.

It is understood that the paper must be free of typographical and grammatical errors. I

strongly urge even the most accomplished writers to seek advice from the Writing Center. Make your appointments early, as they book up quickly. **Check the rules of plagiarism.** Cite all original quotes and paraphrased information. Any academic style is acceptable. However, make sure that you consult a style manual for the exact way to reference materials. Staple your paper (no binders please) and include a title page. You may use footnotes OR endnotes, but either way, your paper MUST have a separate bibliography. **The paper is due in class on Thursday, December 19, 2013. Late papers will receive a drop in grade.** Additionally, you need to email me a copy of your paper.

A 5- page rough draft of your paper is due on November 13/14<sup>th</sup> in class. I am unable to accept drafts after that.

### **The Presentation**

The presentation is your opportunity to share your research with the rest of the class. Use your 5 minutes of glory wisely. Remember that the class is unaware of your project or area of interest. You must successfully “teach” us your topic in 5 minutes. To achieve this you need to quickly summarize your project, and cite specific supporting examples. You obviously cannot share your entire project with the class, so choose your selections carefully.

Do not read your paper, or even read from an abridged version. Rather, use note cards to remind you of key points, and speak to us, not at us. A touch of humor, if appropriate is fine. Just make sure that your presentation is interesting. You selected a topic that you are passionate about. Share the passion with us.

Use any aids that might be helpful: slides, overheads, handouts, music, video, photographs, etc.

### **Grading Criteria**

Participation: discussion and attendance	40%
Research paper, draft, and presentation	<u>60%</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

Participation involves coming to class, completing all of the required readings and active participation in lecture and discussion. The richness of our discussions requires involvement from everyone. Your thoughts and opinions matter.

\*\*\* Please note: Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to chronic psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980, 240 Greene Street, [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd) \*\*\*