**Professor Amy Bentley**

**Department of Nutrition and Food Studies**

**NYU Steinhardt**

**Fall 2017 Syllabus**

**Food and Culture (FOOD-GE.2191.001)**

Tuesdays, 6:45-8:25pm

Location: Meyer 102

Office Address: 411 Lafayette Street, 5th Floor

Office Hours: generally on Wednesdays 2-4 p.m.

Call 212-998-5580 to schedule an appt. during office hours, which are generally Weds. 2-4pm

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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* **3rd edition** **(F&C)**

Available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore (new and used) and online booksellers. Also available to borrow at the Bobst Reserve Reading Room (2 hour limit).

**Recommended (but not required)**

Williams-Forson, P. and Counihan, C. (Eds.), *Taking Food Public: Redefining Food in a Public World* (Routledge, 2011).

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

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

**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. We will be doing close reading of the texts in class so please bring readings to class on the assigned day.

Also, please bring to class your weekly written assignment (indicated below). Assignments must be typed and are not to exceed 1-2 pages.

**Course Schedule Course Introduction**

**September 5** Overview of Course

**September 12 Theories of Food, Part I: The Ideal: Mentalism/Structuralism**

Readings:

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

Douglas, Mary, “Deciphering a Meal." (**NYUC—**not the one in **F&C**)

Paz, Octavio, "Eroticism and Gastrosophy," *Daedalus* 117 (Summer 1998): (227-249). **(NYUC)** [Skim the first few pages and begin reading with earnest on page 236: “Traditional North American cooking is a cuisine with no mysteries: simple, spiceless, nutritious food.”]

Barthes, Roland, “Towards a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food

Consumption.” (**F&C**)

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 sentence summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**September 19 Theories of Food, Part II: The Material**

Readings:

Harris, Marvin, “The Abominable Pig.” **(F&C**)

Fischler, C. "Food, Self and Identity,” *Anthropology of Food* (27),

2 (1988): 275-292. (**NYUC**)

Lucy Long, “Culinary Tourism” **(NYUC)**

Recommended:

Goody, Jack**,** “Industrial Cuisine: Towards the Development of a World Cuisine.” **(F&C)**

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 sentence summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**September 26 Food and Race/Ethnicity and Religion**

Nabhan, Gary Paul, “Rooting Out the Causes of Disease: Why Diabetes is So Common Among Desert Dwellers” (**F&C**)

Heldke, Lisa, “Let’s Cook Thai” **(F&C)**

“The Sporkful” podcasts:

“Other People’s Food Part I: White Chef, Mexican Food,” <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/sporkful/episodes/3>

“Other People’s Food, Part 5: Your Mom’s Crappy Casserole,”

<http://www.wnyc.org/shows/sporkful/episodes/2>

“Your Mom’s Food” Parts 1-4

<http://www.wnyc.org/shows/sporkful/>

(Combine the podcasts into one written summary/thesis articulation)

Recommended:

Poe, Tracey, “The Origins of Soul Food in Black Urban Identity:

Chicago, 1915-1947.” (**NYUC**)

Levenstein, Harvey, “The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-

1930),” (**NYUC**).

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 sentence summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**October 3 Food and Religion**

Readings:

Bynum, Caroline Walker, "Fast, Feast, and Flesh: The Significance of

Food to Medieval Women." (**F&C**)

Buckser, Andrew. “Keeping Kosher: Eating and Social Identity Among

the Jews of Denmark,” *Ethnology*, vol. 38, no. 3 (Summer 1999): 191-209 (**NYUC**).

Recommended:

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.* (**NYUC**)

McCutcheon, Priscilla, “Community Food Security ‘For Us, By Us’: The Nation of Islam and the Pan African Orthodox Christian Church” (**F&C)**

*Weekly written assignment: One paragraph summary and description of your research paper topic.*

**October 10 Food, Gender and Sexuality**

Readings:

Allison, Anne, "Japanese Mothers and Obentos: The Lunch Box as

Ideological State Apparatus." (**F&C**)

Carrington, Christopher, “Feeding Lesbigay Families” **(F&C)**

Swanson, Rebecca, “Domestic Divo? Televised Treatments of Masculinity, Femininity, and Food” **(F&C)**

Parasecoli, Fabio, “Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinity in

Men’s Fitness Magazines.” **(F&C)**

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 paragraph summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**October 17 Food and Socioeconomic Status**

Readings:

Bourdieu, Pierre, **“**Distinction**:** A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste” **(F&C)**

Roseberry, William, “The Rise of Yuppie Coffees and the

Reimagination of Class in the United States.” (**NYUC**)

Fitchen, Janet, "Hunger, Malnutrition, and Poverty in the

Contemporary United States." (**NYUC**)

Poppendieck, Janet, “Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality.”

(**F&C**)

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 sentence summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**October 24** **Food and Identity/Food as Cultural Icon**

Readings:

Weiner, Mark. “Consumer Culture and Participatory Democracy: The

Story of Coca-Cola.” **(NYUC)**

Neustadt, Kathy, "Born among the Shells": The Quakers of Allen Neck and Their Clambake."(**NYUC**)

Lewis, George H. “The Maine Lobster as Regional Icon: Competing

Images Over Time and Social Class” **(NYUC)**

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 sentence summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**October 31 Food, Cooking, Memory and Tradition**

Readings:

Proust, Marcel, “Madeleine” excerpt (**NYUC)**

(no need to write a summary for Proust)

Sutton, David, “Sensory Memory and the Construction of Worlds” **(NYUC)**

Sutton, David. “Cooking Skills, the Senses and Memory” **(F&C)**

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**)

Terrio, Susan, Crafting *Grand Cru* Chocolates in Contemporary France” **(NYUC**)

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 sentence summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**November 7**  **The Locus of Cuisine: Nation, Region, Metropole**

Readings:

Rozin, Elizabeth, “The Structure of Cuisine,” in Barker, Ed., *The Psychobiology of Human Food Selection* (AVI Publishing, 1982). **(NYUC)**

Mintz, Sidney, “Eating American.” (**NYUC**)

Appadurai, Arjun. “How to Make a National Cuisine.” **(F&C)**

Davis, Mitchell, “Eating Out, Eating American: New York Restaurant

Dining and Identity,” in *Gastropolis: Food and New York City*, eds. Annie Hauck-Lawson and Jonathan Deutsch (Columbia UP, 2009): 293-307. **(NYUC)**

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 sentence summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**November 14 Food Avoidance, Aversion and Disgust**

Readings:

Twigg, Julia, “Vegetarianism” (**NYUC**)

Schwabe, Calvin W., “Unmentionable Cuisine” **(NYUC)**

Clark, Dylan, “The Raw and the Rotten” **(F&C)**

**Recommended:**

Thompson, Paul B. “Livestock Welfare the Ethics of Producing Meat” (**NYUC**)

*Weekly written assignment: 2-3 sentence summary and thesis articulation for each article.*

**November 21 No class—work on your papers**

**November 28 Dieting and Curated Eating in the Twenty-first Century and Peer Review**

Reading:

Amy Bentley, “Growing Concerns,” *Times Literary Supplement*,

March 25, 2016. **(NYUC)**

**5 page (minimum) rough draft of research paper due**

Include a thesis, rough chronology of ideas and concluding remarks.

We will work out the logistics of reading and commenting on drafts closer to the date.

*(No weekly assignment due today)*

**December 5 Student Presentations (4 minutes per presentation)**

**Papers Due Tuesday December 19:**

Hard copy required! If you cannot drop one off please mail a copy to the office (Amy Bentley, Dept. of N/FS, NYU, 411 Lafayette Street, 5th fl. NY NY 10003)

**Research Paper and Presentations**

An independent 15-page research paper of your choice, accompanied by a 4-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. In addition to a topic you will choose a **lens** (also know as a framing device or an theoretical approach) through which to analyze and make sense of your topic. Each week we will discuss the readings both in terms of content and analytical lens, and we will take time to discuss how they could relate to your research project.

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 (if you’d like).

**The Paper**

Please type, double space and staple your 15-page paper. Please use 12-point font. 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 excellent especially their historical menu collection. Other archives with food related materials include The New York Academy of Medicine, The NYU Fales Library Marion Nestle Cookbook Collection, as well as other cookbook and food book archives at University of Michigan, Radcliffe College, the British Library, etc. 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 (10) 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.

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 Presentation**

The presentation is your opportunity to share your research with the rest of the class. Use your 6 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 6 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, photographs, food items, etc.

**Grading Criteria**

Participation: discussion and attendance 30%

Weekly assignments 30%

Research paper, draft, and presentation 40%

TOTAL 100%

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) \*\*\*

Please sign and attach to your paper:

HONOR CODE

I pledge that the attached work is my own and that I have received no assistance from anyone in any way executing it beyond others’ reviewing it and making recommendations for revision. This work was not rewritten by another. The words are my own. If I have used someone else's ideas, those ideas have been given full and proper credit. All reference works actually exist and have been fully identified. I pledge that nothing here has been disguised so as to mislead the reader. I understand that it is my responsibility to make public immediately all violations of the code by anyone.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_