

HISTORY 405: FOOD IN WORLD HISTORY

Mondays at 4:15-6:05 ICC 203

Jordan Sand ICC 624 (7-5599) sandj@georgetown.edu
Office hrs. Wednesdays, 1:00-3:00 and by appt.

Preliminaries:

This course explores themes related to food in the shaping of modern societies. The history of food is potentially the history of practically everything. In selecting readings, I have therefore tried to impose certain limits intended to give greater thematic coherence. I have limited the scope to works centrally rather than incidentally related to the production, trade and consumption of foodstuffs (and to a lesser extent beverages). We will discuss tea, for example, but not the Boston Tea Party, an incident whose history can be told without reference to tea-drinking as such. I have also chosen to focus primarily on literate societies, where food production and consumption have evolved in interaction with complex social institutions founded on the written word. In addition, as a corrective to the Eurocentrism of most food writing, I have sought to include as much material on Asia as possible.

I have looked for readings that help answer the most basic question of any modern history: how we got where we are today. Although technology has brought unprecedented abundance globally, access to food sharply divides the wealthy from the poor among nations and individuals. Despite general affluence and mass production, food habits in societies like ours clearly mark individual class and ethnic status. Most of us in first-world cities live far removed from the sources of the food we eat. In restaurants and supermarkets, we enjoy an unprecedented smorgasbord of exotic national cuisines and ingredients. At the same time, multinational corporations threaten local production and foodways with the global homogenization that critics call "McDonaldization." The roots of this contradictory modern condition should be traceable through the history of food in past centuries.

Course Structure and Assignments:

The course is a seminar, built around weekly reading assignments and class discussion. Its success will depend heavily upon your preparation and participation. I also encourage you to bring to class

relevant outside materials (or comestibles) that might enhance discussion.

Writing for the course consists of a weekly reading diary, three short papers (4-5 pages each; select three from the four assignment topics) and one final paper (about 15 pages).

Your diaries should contain thoughts and responses on each week's reading. I will ask you to submit them three times in the semester, just to be sure you are keeping up, and I will use them to help me assess your absorption of the material, so they form part of your Reading and Participation grade. Diaries may be either handwritten or typed, kept in a single volume or submitted loose. If you choose to write by hand, make sure your writing is legible. If you type, I want only your thoughts, without cut-and-paste quotations from digital sources.

Short paper assignments are described briefly below. We will discuss the assignments more in class and I will ask you to present your findings occasionally on an ad hoc basis. The topic for the final paper is open, although it must be historical. I encourage you to develop one of your short papers further for the final paper. Toward the end of the semester, you will be required to submit a precis for this paper together with an annotated bibliography.

All papers and diaries are to be submitted in paper form at the front desk of the History Department on the day indicated in this syllabus (not pushed under the door after hours). Digital versions of papers go at the same time in the Digital Dropbox on the Blackboard site. This way I have one copy to mark and return and another for future reference. We can also share them easily with one another. Paper deadlines fall in the latter half of the week (usually Thursdays) so that the papers do not interfere with your reading assignments.

The grading breakdown is as follows:

Reading and participation:	35%
Short papers:	35%
Final paper:	30%

Where are the readings?

Paper and scanned copies of articles and book chapters, as well as some of the books, are available from Lauinger reserves. I want you to bring either marked paper copies or thorough notes on the reading to class. In the few cases in which we read all or most of a book that is only available on the reserve shelf, this means you may wish to xerox the entire reading at the library well in advance of the assignment (I am telling you this because I know how much Georgetown students loathe reading things in the library).

The following books have been ordered at the bookstore:

Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World*

Sidney W. Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*

Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*

Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *Que Vivan Los Tamales: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity*

Hasia R. Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration*

Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*

Food-related Activities

I am open to suggestions about restaurant outings or cooking demonstrations if we can work it out logistically. You are encouraged to bring in samples of food related to your paper presentations.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

SECTION I: PRODUCTION

Week One (Wednesday, August 29th)

*Introduction: no assignment

Week Two (September 3rd): Hunters, Foragers, and Farmers

***no class: discussion on line (post to Blackboard forum)**

- Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs and Steel*, 13-32, 85-175
- Marshall Sahlins, "The Original Affluent Society"

Week Three (September 10th): Rice as Civilization

- Francesca Bray, *The Rice Economies*, 1-61, 113-139, 199-227
- Emiko Ohnuki-Tierney, *Rice as Self*, 3-98

Week Four (September 17th): Understanding Famines

- Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts*
- Brett Walker, "Commercial Growth and Environmental Change in Early Modern Japan: Hachinohe's Wild Boar Famine of 1749"

Week Five (September 24th): Wheat and the Politics of Feeding the World

- John Perkins, *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution* (book at Lauinger reserves)
- Shirley Lindenbaum, "Loaves and Fishes in Bangladesh"

Assignment One (due September 27th): Oral histories. How many degrees of separation are there between you and a primary producer? What do or did they produce and how? Find someone and ask them

about how they grew, caught, slaughtered, gathered or otherwise obtained and processed a food source. Ask about changes in this process. Ask about recipes too. Bring something in if you can. Alternatively, interview someone in the business of prepared food manufacture or food distribution and retrace the steps between the food's source and yourself.

SECTION II: TRADE

Week Six (October 1st): Spices and the Rise of Global Trade

- Andrew Dalby, *Dangerous Tastes: The Story of Spices*, selections
- Additional reading TBA

Submit reading diary for weeks 1-6 before 4:00 pm Friday, October 5th

Week Seven (October 8th): Sugar, Colonialism, and Changing European Consumption Habits

Columbus Day—no class, discussion on Blackboard

Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*

Week Eight (October 15th): Preserving Proteins and the Industrialization of Food

- Mark Kurlansky, *Cod*, 15-77
- Jack Goody, "Industrial Food: Towards the Development of a World Cuisine," in *Cooking, Cuisine, and Class*, 154-172
- William Cronon, "Annihilating Space: Meat," in *Nature's Metropolis*, 207-259.
- Katarzyna Cweirtka, "Japanese Military Diet"

Discussion of fish preservation in Thailand with anthropologist Leedom Lefferts.

Assignment Two (due October 18th): Where did it come from? Research and write a short history of the origins of some food product or culinary preparation. Check the Wikipedia entry for your item and find ways to improve it. Bring the product in for us on Monday.

SECTION III: CONSUMPTION

Week Nine (October 22nd) : Urban Markets and Haute Cuisine

- Naomichi Ishige, *The History and Culture of Japanese Food*, 105-139
- Michael Freeman, "Sung," in K.C. Chang, ed., *Food in Chinese Culture*
- Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*, 1-165
- George Perec, "Attempt at an Inventory of the Liquid and the Solid Foodstuffs Injuried by Me in the Course of the Year Nineteen Hundred and Seventy-Four"

Week Ten (October 29th): Cuisine, Table Manners and Class

- Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste*, 1-13, 169-200, 382-3
- Murai, "Development of Chanoyu"
- Louise Cort, "Japanese Ceramics and Cuisine"
- Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin, *The Physiology of Taste*, 3-4, 52-57, 68-72, 106-113, 131-140
- Frederick W. Mote, "Yuan and Ming" in *Food in Chinese Culture*
- Anon., Three Customs and Ten Sins: A Fragment on Fashions in Cuisine, in Victor Mair, ed., *Columbia Anthology of Traditional Chinese Literature*, 649-658

Submit reading diary for weeks 5-10 by 4:00 pm Friday, November 2nd

Week Eleven (November 5th): Modernization of the Kitchen and the Gendering of Food Preparation

- Ruth Cowan Schwarz, *More Work for Mother: The Ironies of Household Technology from the Open Hearth to the Microwave*, 40-73
- Laura Shapiro, "Do Women Like to Cook?"
- Ann Allison, "Japanese Mothers and Obentos: the Lunchbox as Ideological State Apparatus" in *Food and Culture* (book on reserve)
- NHK television, "Project X: the Dining Kitchen" (video in class)

Assignment Three (due Thursday, November 8th): What did they eat? Using a diary, a literary work, an account book, a menu, or some other written source, investigate the contents of someone's meals in the past.

Week Twelve (November 12th): Food and Health

- Francis Zimmerman, *The Jungle and the Aroma of Meats*, 1-9, 159-223 **before reading, first look up "Ayuverda" in a reference source.
- James Whorton, *Crusaders for Fitness*, 201-238 ("Muscular Vegetarianism")
- John Money, *The Destroying Angel*, 17-27 ("The Diet that Cured Sex")
- E.N. Anderson, "Traditional Medical Values of Food"
- Mark R. Finlay, "Early Marketing of the Theory of Nutrition: The Science and Culture of Liebig's Extract of Meat," in Kamminga and Cunningham eds., *The Science and Culture of Nutrition, 1840-1940*, 48-74
- Milles, "Working Capacity and Caloric Consumption," in *The Science and Culture of Nutrition*
- David Arnold, "The Discovery of Malnutrition and Diet in Colonial India"

Assignment Four (due Thursday, November 15th): How were foodstuffs, food preparations, or consumption practices classified and systematized? Analyze a single cookbook or text about dietary principles. Provide historical context.

Week Thirteen (November 19th): Food in the Formation of National Identities

- Jeffrey Pilcher, *Que Vivan los Tamales*
- Arjun Appadurai, "How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India"

Week Fourteen (November 26th): Food in the Formation of Immigrant Identities

- Hasia Diner, *Hungering for America: Italian, Irish, and Jewish Foodways in the Age of Migration*

Week Fifteen (December 3rd): Fast Food, Slow Food, and Globalization

Deadline for submission of final paper precis and annotated bibliography

- Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal*
- Jordan Sand, "A Short History of MSG"
- Theodore Bestor, "How Sushi Went Global"
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/issue_novdec_2000/essay-bestor.html
- Bak, "McDonalds in Seoul" in James Watson, ed., *Golden Arches East: McDonalds in East Asia*
- Rachel Laudan, "A Plea for Culinary Modernism: Why We Should Love New, Fast, Processed Food"
- <http://www.slowfood.com/>

Friday, December 14th: Final paper and reading diary for weeks 11-15 due