

Cultural Politics of Food and Eating (4CP3)

Term 1, 2017

Instructor: Kee H Yong

Office Hours: Wed. 13:00-14:00

or by appointment

Wed.: 14:30 – 17:20 @ TSH B129

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Course Descriptions and Objectives

The study of food parallels the birth of many disciplines in the social sciences and humanities. Food is not just about eating, it is a medium that illuminates a wide range of practices – of marriages, exchange theory, religion, conquest, and so on. For example, the impact of colonialism and migration - often forced-migration - has brought about exchange of food: the import of staple products and other food stuffs from the colonized to the colonizing countries and vice versa. Rather than focusing on the topic of food as a general subject, we will concentrate on the relationship of food onto a complex field of relationships, expectations, and choices that are contested, negotiated, and often unequal. In our study of the transformations in food production and consumption, we will examine the passage of “new world” foods into Europe and Asia, the rise of commercial agriculture, the advent of fast food culture, and alternative food movements.

Course Policy

All reading is required and must be completed before the week in which given topics are being discussed. Attendance at all lectures is expected. Class participation requires your bodily presence in class and intellectual engagement with the material. My evaluation of your participation will take into account how well you complete formal tasks such as leading discussion, asking questions, or presenting a reading as assigned, and your willingness to participate in class discussion in general.

Weekly discussions

Students should be prepared to participate in class discussions. In addition, each student will be responsible for presenting on selected chapters/articles from the assigned ethnography, book chapters, or articles and leading subsequent class discussion during the semester. Presentations must outline the main arguments in the text, provide some supporting examples for these arguments from the text, and evaluate those arguments in terms of supporting or opposed scholarship.

Grading distribution

Attendance, participations, discussions	20%
Four one-page synopsis	10%
Midterm essay	30%
Final essay	40%

Four one-page synopsis, Midterm, and Final essays

Students are also expected to hand four one-page synopsis, a mid-term and final essay. Topics of these essays and their due dates will be distributed in advance. Written assignments must be handed on the assigned due date. Late assignments will only be accepted in extenuating circumstances.

Instructor responsibilities

To present class material in clearly understandable language, to assist students in thinking critically about concepts and ideas, to respect student opinion and value each student's contributions equally, and to give feedback on student progress early and often; to be accessible during office hours, and to return all course materials, graded, in a timely fashion.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g., the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: "Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various kinds of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, Appendix 3, <http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g., the submission of work that is not one's own for which other credit has been obtained. (*Insert specific course information, e.g., style guide*)
2. Improper collaboration in group work. (*Insert specific course information*)
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

(*If applicable*) In this course we will be using a software package designed to reveal plagiarism. Students will be required to submit their work electronically and in hard copy so that it can be checked for academic dishonesty.

Faculty of Social Sciences E-Mail Communication Policy

Effective September 1, 2010, it is the policy of the Faculty of Social Sciences that all e-mail communication sent from students to instructors (including TAs), and from students to staff, must originate from the student's own McMaster University e-mail account. This policy protects confidentiality and confirms the identity of the student. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that communication is sent to the university from a McMaster account. If an instructor becomes aware that a communication has come from an alternate address, the instructor may not reply at his or her discretion.

Email Forwarding in MUGSI:

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/uts/support/email/emailforward.html>

*Forwarding will take effect 24-hours after students complete the process at the above link

MSAF

- The MSAF should be used for medical and non-medical (personal) situations.
- Approval of the MSAF is automatic (i.e. no documentation required)
- Rules governing the MSAF are as follows:

- The timeframe within which the MSAF is valid has been reduced from 5 days to 3 days.
 - The upper limit for when an MSAF can be submitted has been reduced from 'less than 30%' to 'less than 25%' of the course weight.
 - The 'one MSAF per term' limit is retained.
 - As per the policy, an automated email will be sent to the course instructor, who will determine the appropriate relief. Students must immediately follow up with their instructors. Failure to do so may negate their relief.
- Policy: The MSAF policy can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar under General Academic Regulations > Requests for Relief for Missed Academic Term Work or here:
http://academiccalendars.romcmaster.ca/content.php?catoid=11&navoid=1698#Requests_for_Relief_for_Missed_Academic_Term_Work

AODA

If you require this information in an alternate/accessible format, please contact Marcia Furtado at 905-525-9140 ext. 24423 or email furtam1@mcmaster.ca.

Reading schedule

Part One: Historical-anthropological study of food: In this section we will concentrate on one of the first cash crops in modern history, sugar. How did sugar transform not only the British societies and Europe, but also the world.

Mintz, Sidney. 1985. *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Elisabeth Sifton Books (**book placed on reserved at Mills Library**).

Sept. 6: Introduction to the course

Sept. 13:

- *Sweetness and Power*, chapter 1 & 2

Sept. 20:

- *Sweetness and Power*, chapter 3 & 4

Part Two: Social History of Eating: Do all societies feel the same way about food: what it means to eat; how eating is being human; and what is eating properly? This section touches on food history, and by extension, about social history.

Mintz, Sidney. 1996. *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom: Excursions into Eating, Culture, and the Past*. Boston: Beacon Press (**book placed on reserved at Mills Library**)

Sept. 27:

- *Tasting Food, Tasting Freedom*, chapter 2 & 3

Oct. 4: Part Three: Economics and Politics of Food - Food is not just about eating; it is also about economics and politics.

James Watson and Melissa Caldwell (eds.). 2005. *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*. Ma: Blackwell Publishing (**book placed on reserved at Mills Library**).

Oct. 18: Chapter 5: “China’s Big Mac Attack” by James L. Watson. *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*. MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp 70-79.

- Chapter 8: The Rise of Yuppie Coffees and the Reimagination of Class in the United States. *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*. MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp 122-143.

Oct. 25:

- Chapter 12: “India Shopping: Indian Grocery Stores and Transnational Configurations of Belonging” by Purnima Mankekar. *The Cultural Politics of Food and Eating: A Reader*. MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp 197-214.
- Robbins, Richard. 2013. Chapter 6: “Hunger, Poverty, and Economic Development” *The Global Problems and the Culture of Capitalism (6th Edition)*. Allyn and Bacon Publishing Inc. 2013.

Nov. 1: Midterm Essay due in class on October 25, 2017

Part Four: Food, Space, and Identity: What are the social and cultural meanings of eating together, or to word it slightly differently, of gathering around the table?

Visser, Margaret. 1991. *The Ritual of Dinner*. New York: Grove Weidenfield (**book placed on reserved at Mills Library**)

- Chapter Three: The Pleasure of Your Company
- Chapter Four: Dinner is Served

Nov. 8: Part Five: Food Violence: Was the genocide in Rwanda a politicized ethnic issue or was the political economy of coffee part of the reasons?

- Kamola, Isaac. 2007. The Global Coffee Economy and the Production of Genocide in Rwanda. *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 28(3): 571-592.

➤ **Movie:** *Babette’s Feast*

Nov. 15: Part Six: Food and Global Warming: What are some of relationship between food and global warming?

Roberts, Ian. 2010. *The Energy Glut: The Politics of Fatness in an Overheating World*. London: Zed Books (**book placed on reserved at Mills Library**).

To pick two chapters chapter 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6

Perhaps to consider replacing this part with something on the role of botanical gardens and the European Encounter and move this section to the front, the earlier weeks of the term.

Nov. 22: Part Seven: Local Food and Current Trend: What are some of the issues surrounding local food movements.

- Mount, Phil. 2011. Growing local food: scale, and local food systems governance. *Agric Hum Values* (DOI 10.1007/s10460-011-9331-0)
- DeLind, Laura. 2011. Are local food and the local food movement taking us where we want to go? *Agric Hum Values* 28: 273-283 (DOI 10.1007/s10460-010-9263-0)

Nov. 29:

- Smithers, John and Alun Joseph. 2010. The trouble with authenticity. *Agric Hum Values* 27:239–247 (DOI 10.1007/s10460-009-9250-5) *to consider deleting for 2017 class*
- Specter, Michael. 2014. Seeds of Doubt: An Activist’s Controversial Crusade Against Genetically Modified Crops. *The New Yorker* (August 25): 46-57.

Final essay due on December 6, 2017 at my office (CNH 535) between 12:00 to 16:00

Latest update August 25, 2017

<p>The instructor and university reserve the right to modify elements of the course during the term. The university may change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of the student to check his/her McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.</p>
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