History 27
Local Harvest, Global Industry: History of the Production and Consumption of Food

Spring 2015

A human being is primarily a bag for putting food into; the other functions and faculties may be more godlike, but in point of time they come afterwards. A man dies and is buried, and all his words and actions are forgotten, but the food he has eaten lives after him in the sound or rotten bones of his children. I think it plausibly could be argued that changes of diet are more important than changes of dynasty or even of religion.

--George Orwell, “The Road To Wigan Pier”

I am a farm worker. I am not embarrassed to be a farm worker. I know that my work is difficult. But many rich people eat from my labor. I work a lot and earn little. But my job is an honest job.

--Maria “Cuca” Carmona, Mujeres Mexicanas

Course Description:
This course will look at various ways to understand the complex role of food in society. We will look at issues of food production and consumption, and how our relationship to food contributes to the political and social structures that we live with. Our approach will be historical and pay special attention to the ways in which communities of color and immigrants have shaped, and have been shaped by, the food they cultivate, harvest, consume, and market. The readings explore how food creates ways for people to form bonds of belonging while also creating bonds of control and regimes of inequality.

Learning Outcomes:
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Identify various approaches to the study of food
• Illustrate multiple approaches to understanding change over time
• Take on the perspectives of historical actors
• Critically analyze historical texts
• Describe how historians use primary sources to create arguments
• Evaluate the thesis, methodology, and success of an academic work
• Understand the food, authenticity, and diet are historically contingent

These are crucial building blocks for Learning Outcomes of the History major:

• Recognize the processes by which societies, cultures, and institutions change over time.
• Describe particular historical developments and explain their wider context.
• Critically read, analyze, and synthesize primary and secondary sources.
• Use methods of narrative and analysis appropriately for communicating historical phenomena.
• Identify the various contexts that shape the construction and use of historical sources and knowledge.
• Identify a historical question and define an approach to it.

**General Education Guidelines**

Decision making – the students in this course are asked to evaluate and interpret primary source evidence and to make decisions on the sources validity, authenticity, provenance, and meaning.

Communication – students will be required to participate in discussion section and verbally communicate their ideas to one another. The course is also writing intensive with weekly writing assignments due in class. Additionally they are required to conduct an oral history with a family member that helps them develop technical and interpersonal skills.

Self and Society – this course approaches the production and consumption of food as a global force that structures societies. Students are asked to think about how their food choices affect communities across the globe as well as at home.

**Grading**

*Participation 25%*
*Writing Exercises 55%*
*Passports 20%*

**Assignments**

*Participation*
Participation is a key component of learning. I expect each and every one of you to be active agents in your own education. That means you must attend class and every absence will result in a negative effect on your grade. That being said, participation does not mean just showing up. My definition of active participation include the following; doing the reading **BEFORE** class, listening actively, engaging your fellow students while maintaining respect for one another. Bring your readings to class and be prepared to discuss them. You are welcome to have a conversation with each other, not just with me. Remember, you can have challenging ideas without being a challenging person.

*Writing Exercises*
Throughout the course of the semester you will be given writing prompts to complete. Each writing prompt will come with specific questions and directions. The writing exercises are meant to introduce you to various skills needed in the historical profession.

*Passports*
Passports are short written assignments that are due on the days we discuss readings. They are called passports because they are your ticket into class. If you do not have a
passport you will not be allowed to attend discussion. All passport topics will be provided at the end of class on Tuesday. Passports should be 700-1000 words, single spaced, 1-inch margins, and 12-point Times New Roman. Please answer the passport question in HARD COPY, submit a Microsoft Word file on CROPS and BRING it to class.

**Format**

This class is designed as a lecture with weekly discussion sections.

**Reading and Lecture Schedule**

**Week One – What is Food History?**
Readings: Sidney Mintz, “Eating American”


  Jeffrey M. Pilcher, “The First World Cuisine”

**Week Two – The Invention of Cooking and the Meaning of Eating**

  Marvin Harris, “The Abominable Pig”

  Caroline Walker Bynum, “Fast, Feast, and Flesh: The Religious Significance to Food to Medieval Women”

**Week Three – Cultural and Ecological Exchange**
Readings: Judith A. Carney, “African Rice in the Columbian Exchange”

  Paul Freedman “Spices and Late-Medieval European Idea of Scarcity and Value”

  Sidney Mintz, “Sweetness and Power”

**Week Four – Inequality and the Rise of Haute Cuisine**
Readings: Elliot Shore “Dining Out: The Development of the Restaurant”

  Paul Freedman, “American Restaurants and Cuisine in the Mid-Nineteenth Century”
Roger Horowitz, Jeffrey M. Pilcher, and Sydney Watts, “Meat for the Multitudes: Market Culture in Paris, New York City and Mexico City over the Long Nineteenth Century”

**Week Five – Colonial Creole and other Ideas About America**

Readings: William Cronon, “Seasons of Want and Plenty” and “Bounding the Land”

Donna Gabaccia, “Colonial Creoles”

Rachel B. Herrman, “The ‘tragicall historie’: Cannibalism and Abundance in Colonial Jamestown”

**Week Six – We Are What We Eat? American Cuisine and Foodways**

Readings: Janet Siskind, “The Invention of Thanksgiving: A Ritual of American Nationality”


**Week Seven – Gender, National Defense, and Post-War Technologies**

Readings: Amy Bentley, “Booming Baby Food: Infant Food and Feeding in Post World War II America”

Harvey Levenstein, “’Best for Babies or Preventable Infanticide’? The Controversy over Artificial Feeding of Infants in American, 1880-1920”

Garbriella M. Petrick, “Like Ribbons of Green and Gold: Industrializing Lettuce and the Quest for Quality in the Salinas Valley”

**Week Eight – The Cold War and the Politics of Hunger**

Readings: Ken Albala, “Cookbooks as Historical Documents”

Nick Calluther, “The Hungry World”

Jessamyn Neuhaus, “The Way to a Man’s Heart: Gender Roles, Domestic Ideology and Cookbooks in the 1950s”
**Week Nine – Immigration, Identity, and “Authenticity”**
Readings: Jennie Germann Molz, “Tasting an Imagined Thailand: Authenticity and Culinary Tourism in Thai Restaurants”

Jeffrey M. Pilcher, “Tamales or Timbales: Cuisine and the Formation of Mexican National Identity”

Lisa Heldke, “Let’s Eat Chinese: Reflections on Cultural Food Colonialism” and “Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism”

**Week Ten – Green Revolution, Famine, and the Third World**
Readings: Vandana Shiva, “Principles of Earth Democracy”

Jennifer Clapp, “The Political Economy of Food Aid in an Era of Agricultural Biotechnology”

**Week Eleven – Globalization or How America Exported its Foodways**
Readings: Jeffrey M. Pilcher “Industrial Tortillas and Folkloric Pepsi: The Nutritional Consequences of Hybrid Cuisines in Mexico”

Eric Schlosser, “The Chain Never Stops”

**Week Twelve – Food Sovereignty, Security, and Rebellions**
Readings: Deboarh Barndt, “‘Choice?’ ‘Flexible’ Women Workers in the Tomato Food Chain”

Raj Patel, “What Does Food Sovereignty Look Like?”

Hannah Wittman, “The Origins and Potential of Food Sovereignty”

**Week Thirteen – Food Politics and the Food Industry’s Influence**

**Week Fourteen – The Ideal Meal**
Readings: Alison Leitch, “Slow Food and the Politics of Pork Fat: Italian Food and European Identity”

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

**Week Fifteen - TBA**

**Week Sixteen - TBA**