

506:402:09
History Seminar: Food in the United States
Spring 2013

Wednesdays 9:50-12:50
Scott Hall, Room 215 (College Avenue Campus)
Prof. Jamie Pietruska <pietrusk@rci.rutgers.edu>
Office: Van Dyck Hall 101D Office phone: 848.932.8544
Office hours: Tues 12:30-2:30, Wed 1-2:30 (or by appointment)

Course Description

Eating is one of the most basic human biological functions, yet food is extremely complex. Whether sitting down at a table, eating while walking across campus, or driving through a fast-food restaurant, we are embedded in far-flung chains of production and distribution, political and economic power relations, and social norms and cultural traditions regarding food. Recent critiques of our global food system have sought to illuminate these complexities and to trace the often lengthy paths of agricultural commodities from farm to table, but our industrialized food system has much deeper historical roots in the nineteenth-century United States.

This seminar will focus on the history of food in the United States, primarily in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and ask the following questions: How has agricultural labor changed over time? How do race, class, and gender shape the experiences of agricultural laborers? How did agricultural production and distribution become industrialized? How have patterns of migration shaped foodways in American culture? What role has government played in the production, regulation, and consumption of food? How have advertising and a mass market shaped patterns of shopping, cooking, and dining? How have ideals of gender and domesticity intersected with food and foodways? How have hunger and food scarcity inspired but also defied reform efforts? How have late-twentieth- and twenty-first-century critiques of our global food system affected consumer culture?

The purpose of the seminar is two-fold: to study historical approaches to food, and to write an original historical research paper on a topic of your own design. The first half of the semester will orient students to recent historical scholarship on food through readings organized around these major themes: production and industrial agriculture; food and foodways; food, politics, and the state; marketing and consumption; hunger and foraging; critiques and reform. During the first half of the semester students will also begin original research in primary and/or archival sources on a topic chosen in consultation with the professor. Throughout the semester students will work on smaller interim assignments designed to frame a research question and a preliminary argument. The second half of the semester will be devoted to the writing of a draft and a final version of a 20- to 25-page research paper based on primary and secondary sources. At the end of the course, students will make short formal presentations of their research projects.

Required books (at Barnes & Noble at Rutgers, NJ Books, and on reserve at Alexander Library)

Carole M. Counihan, ed., *Food in the USA: A Reader* (Routledge, 2002)
ISBN: 0415932327 (paperback)

Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty: A Social History of Eating in Modern America, Revised Edition*
(University of California Press, 2003)
ISBN: 0520234405 (paperback)

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals* (Penguin, 2007)
ISBN: 0143038583 (paperback)

This syllabus, additional readings, and other course materials will be posted on Sakai.
<<https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal>>

Course Objectives

- Understand recent historiographical trends in food history.
- Critically analyze secondary sources, both in writing and in class discussion.
- Undertake original historical research in primary and possibly archival sources.
- Construct an original historical argument based on primary and secondary sources.
- Communicate complex ideas effectively, in standard written English, to a general audience. (SAS Core Goal S1)
- Respond effectively to editorial feedback from peers, instructors, and/or supervisors through successive drafts and revision. (SAS Core Goal S2)
- Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry. (SAS Core Goal T)
- Evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly. (SAS Core Goal U)
- Analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights. (SAS Core Goal V)

Course Policies

Attendance

Students are expected to attend all sessions and to be active and thoughtful participants in class discussion. **More than one (1) unexcused absence (i.e., other than a documented illness, documented emergency, religious observance, or university-approved absence) will result in a deduction of 5 percentage points from your course grade for each additional unexcused absence.** Please note that an excused absence does not mean that you email me an excuse before class; an excused absence means that you provide me with a note from a doctor, dean, or coach that explains your absence. **All absences, whether excused or unexcused, should be entered into the university absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> , where you will indicate the date and reason for your absence.** I will receive an automatic email from this system, so there is no need to send me a separate email regarding your attendance.

Attendance involves not only physical presence, but also mental presence. **No cell phones, laptops, tablets, or any other electronic devices may be used during class for any reason. You will need to print out any readings from Sakai and bring them with you to class. (If you have a documented condition that prevents you from taking notes by hand, please contact me so that we can arrange accommodations for you.)** I consider each of you a valuable member of our shared intellectual community this semester, and I fully expect that you will conduct yourselves accordingly.

Assignments

During the first half of the course, students will be required to complete the assigned weekly readings and write a 1-page analytical response to the week's readings (to be posted on the course Sakai blog prior to our class meeting). Throughout the semester, students will be required to submit interim assignments that will culminate in the writing of a 20-25 page original research paper on a topic chosen in consultation with the professor (statement of topic, annotated bibliography, analysis of a primary source, topic sentence outline, draft of research paper). **Please note that all assignments must be successfully completed in order to pass the course.**

Grading

15%	Class participation
15%	Critical responses to weekly reading
5%	Research topic statement
5%	Annotated bibliography
5%	One Best Source
5%	Topic sentence outline
15%	Draft of research paper
30%	Revision of research paper
5%	Final presentation of research

Academic Integrity

The foundation of this course and any scholarly endeavor is academic integrity. I fully expect that all students will adhere to principles of academic integrity in their work. All written work must be a student's own original work. Any and all references to other sources within your own paper must be properly documented according to the guidelines in the Chicago Manual of Style, which is available at the Alexander Library.

You are responsible for understanding the Rutgers policies regarding academic integrity, as outlined here:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>

Ignorance of these policies or the consequences for violations is not an acceptable excuse.

The Rutgers Writing Program has an excellent webpage that details some of the subtleties of plagiarism, which I urge you to read carefully:

<http://wp.rutgers.edu/courses/plagiarism>

The Rutgers Libraries webpage has an interactive online tutorial, which I also urge you to consult, that provides concrete examples of what is and what is not plagiarism:

<http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html>

Another valuable resource that you should consult is the Rutgers Libraries webpage that explains how to take careful reading notes so that you will not fall into the trap of unintentional plagiarism as you are writing:

http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/lib_instruct/instruct_document.shtml

If you have any questions about quoting, paraphrasing, or referring to the work of others, please ask! It is better to be safe than sorry, better to have too many citations than not enough and thus run the risk of unintentional plagiarism.

Any and all violations of academic integrity in this course will result in the formal consequences and disciplinary action that are outlined in the Rutgers policy on academic integrity. I have a zero-tolerance policy for plagiarism and refer all violations directly to the Office of Student Conduct.

Schedule

Week 1 (23 Jan): Introduction

Course overview

Film (in class): *Food, Inc.*

Recommended reading:

Warren Belasco, "Food Matters: Perspectives on an Emerging Field," in *Food Nations*, eds. Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton (Routledge, 2001), pp. 2-23 [Sakai]

Sidney W. Mintz, "Food and Eating: Some Persisting Questions," in *Food Nations*, eds. Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton (Routledge, 2001), pp. 24-33 [Sakai]

Week 2 (30 Jan): Production/Industrial Agriculture

William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (W. W. Norton, 1992), prologue and chapter 5 [Sakai]

Deborah Fitzgerald, *Every Farm a Factory: The Industrial Ideal in American Agriculture* (Yale UP, 2003), introduction and chapter 1 [Sakai]

Deborah Fink, "Farm Boys Don't Believe in Radicals': Rural Time and Meatpacking Workers" (*Food in the USA*, pp. 143-148)

Assignment: 1-page critical response to the reading (post on Sakai blog)

Week 3 (6 Feb): Food and Foodways

Donna Gabaccia, "What Do We Eat?" (*Food in the USA*, pp. 35-40)

Janet Siskind, "The Invention of Thanksgiving: Ritual of American Nationality" (*Food in the USA*, pp. 41-58)

Harvey Levenstein, "The American Response to Italian Food, 1880-1930" (*Food in the USA*, pp. 75-90)

Tracey N. Poe, "The Origins of Soul Food in Black Urban Identity: Chicago, 1915-1947" (*Food in the USA*, pp. 91-108)

Sharon R. Sherman, "The Passover Seder: Ritual Dynamics, Foodways, and Family Folklore" (*Food in the USA*, pp. 193-204)

Assignment: 1-page critical response to the reading (post on Sakai blog)

Week 4 (13 Feb): Food, Politics, and the State

Susan Levine, *School Lunch Politics: The Surprising History of America's Favorite Welfare Program* (Princeton UP, 2008), introduction and chapter 3 [Sakai]

Amy Bentley, "Islands of Serenity: Gender, Race, and Ordered Meals During World War II" (*Food in the USA*, pp. 171-192)

Mark Weiner, "Consumer Culture and Participatory Democracy: The Story of Coca-Cola During World War II" (*Food in the USA*, pp. 123-141)

Harvey Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, pp. 53-100

Assignment: 1-page critical response to the reading (post on Sakai blog)/ 1 paragraph statement of proposed research topic (upload to Sakai dropbox)

Week 5 (20 Feb): Historical Research at Rutgers

Session with Rutgers History Librarian Tom Glynn, Room 413, Alexander Library

Week 6 (27 Feb): Marketing and Consumption

Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, pp. 101-130

Susanne Freidberg, *Fresh: A Perishable History* (Harvard UP, 2009), introduction and chapter 4 [Sakai]

Tracey Deutsch, “Untangling Alliances: Social Tensions Surrounding Independent Grocery Stores and the Rise of Mass Retailing,” in *Food Nations*, eds. Warren Belasco and Philip Scranton (Routledge, 2001), pp. 156-174[Sakai]

James L. Watson, “China’s Big Mac Attack” (*Food in the USA*, pp. 347-357)

Assignment: 1-page critical response to the reading (post on Sakai blog) / Annotated bibliography (upload to Sakai dropbox)

Week 7 (6 Mar): Hunger and Foraging

Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, pp. 131-159

Marion Nestle, “Hunger in the United States: Policy Implications” (*Food in the USA*, pp. 385-399)

Gary Paul Nabhan, “Diabetes, Diet, and Native American Foraging Traditions” (*Food in the USA*, pp. 231-237)

Jane Kramer, “The Food at Our Feet,” *New Yorker*, November 21, 2011 [Sakai]

Film (excerpts screened in class): *Dive!: Living off America’s Waste*

Assignment: 1-page critical response to the reading (post on Sakai blog)

Week 8 (13 Mar): Research week

No class on Wednesday—individual meetings with Prof. Pietruska

Assignment: One Best Source (upload to Sakai dropbox)

Spring Recess

Week 9 (27 Mar): Critiques and Reform?

Levenstein, *Paradox of Plenty*, pp. 160-267

Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*

Betty L. Wells, et al., “Growing Food, Growing Community: Community Supported Agriculture in Rural Iowa” (*Food in the USA*, pp. 401-408)

Assignment: 1-page critical response (post on Sakai blog)

Week 10 (3 Apr): Writing Workshop—Analyzing primary sources

Assignment: Bring 3 copies of your 3 best primary sources to class

Week 11 (10 Apr): Writing Workshop—Constructing an Argument

Assignment: Bring an outline of topic sentences to class

Week 12 (17 Apr): Writing Workshop—Peer Review

Assignment: Bring a copy of your draft (at least 10 pages) to class

Week 13 (24 Apr): Writing week

No class on Wednesday—individual meetings with Prof. Pietruska

Week 14 (1 May): Conclusions

Film (in class): *King Corn*

Final presentations and celebration (with Prof. Fabian’s seminar on Animals in U.S. History):

Tuesday, May 7th (5:30-7:30 PM in Van Dyck 301)

FINAL PAPER DUE: Monday, May 13th (in hard copy at my office by 3 PM)