

Food and Drink in America, 1513-2013

AMH 3931

Spring 2015

Keene Flint 121

MWF, Period 7 (1:55-2:45)

Instructor: Nick Foreman

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Office hours: *tbd*

Course Description:

The history of food is the history of literally everything. By virtue of its nutrients alone, food is the basic prerequisite for any human action or development. But the meaning of food extends beyond the physical needs of the body into the symbolic and ethereal realms of culture. Beginning with pre-Colombian food practices like the development of corn in Mesoamerica and ending in the twenty first century with issues of dietary inequality and the global food economy, this course will explore the material and imagined roles of food and drink in the history of our continent. Through readings on the production, consumption, and perceptions of the things we eat and drink, we will address issues related to race, class, gender, and culture, and find the meaning behind the meal.

Required Texts: We will be using these books throughout the course, so you'll probably want to buy them. All but the Wallach/Swindall book are available for under \$15 online.

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

Jeffrey Pilcher, *Que Viva Los Tamales!*

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

Wallach, Jennifer Jensen and Lindsey R. Swindall, *American Appetites, a Documentary Reader*

Additional Resources: Most of these books will pop up as selections in our weekly reading assignments, which I'll post in Canvas. You don't *have* to buy them, with the possible exception of the book you choose for your review essay.

Fernandez-Armesto, Felipe, *Near a Thousand Tables*

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

Ferris, Marcie Cohen, *The Edible South: The Power of Food and the Making of an American Region*
Hilliard, Sam Bowers, *Hog Meat and Hoe Cake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860.*
McWilliams, James, *A Revolution in Eating*
McWilliams, James, *Just Food: Where Locavores Get it Wrong and How we can Truly Eat Responsibly*
Mintz, Sidney, *Sweetness and Power*
Morton, Paula, *Tortillas: A Cultural History*
Opie, Frederick Jackson, *Hog and Hominy*
Wallach, Jennifer Jensen, *How America Eats: A Social History of U.S. Food and Culture*
Wilson, Bee, *Consider the Fork: A History of How we Cook and Eat*
Veit, Helen Zoe, *Modern Food, Moral Food: Self Control, Science, and the Rise of Modern American Eating in the Early Twentieth Century*

-or-

Another book on Food History of your choosing (pending approval by me)

Class Format:

The class will be organized around readings and other selected media designed to encourage collaborative discussion. Lectures on Monday and Wednesday will provide the framework and concepts to be applied in Friday's discussion section. Weekly readings will be around 50-60 pages at the most, but it is imperative that you read, otherwise our discussions will be a real bummer. Exams and written assignments will be based on weekly readings as well as a book review of your choice. An annotated food journal will also constitute a percentage of your overall grade. Towards the end of the semester we will hold a potlatch at which you can each demonstrate your newly acquired culinary expertise.

Grades and Assignments:

Although I know you all go to college for the intrinsic reward of learning and not the grades, the overall score you earn in this class will be tabulated based on a 500 pt scale. Each subdivision of your grade (i.e. tests, assignments, attendance) is weighted the same, but you will have to diversify your effort in this class to earn a high score. The point breakdown is as follows:

Two Exams: 100pts each

Exams will be based on the readings and lecture, and will be in the form of short answer and essay questions.

Food Journal: 100 pts

Students will be responsible for recording at least one meal each day throughout the semester. In addition to assuring that you all eat so that you can grow up big and strong, this will serve to inform you on your eating habits and provide fodder for discussion section. Feel free to write this information down wherever you please,

but keep in mind that journal entries will be read each week in discussion and will be due for a grade at the end of the semester.

Book Review: 100 pts

Students will be asked to select one book, either from the preapproved list above, or of their own choosing (with permission) and compose a 3-5 pg review and analysis of the work. Using themes from the class, this assignment should provide you an opportunity to read something you actually *want* to read, while also asking you to think critically about the material you've learned over the course of the semester.

Attendance: 100 pts

Attendance will be taken in discussion section each week until the roster has solidified and I am familiar with each of you on a name basis. After that, your attendance score will depend on the depth of your engagement in class discussions. Obviously, those who fail to attend discussion will have a difficult time acquiring these points, which make up 20% of your overall grade.

Course Policies:

Attendance Policy:

Beyond an initial period of roster verification, I will not be recording attendance in the way the authoritarians of your youth might have. You are adults, and so I trust your ability to prioritize and take school seriously without a mandate. However, students who choose not to attend diligently and on time will notice a widening chasm between themselves and the grades they'd prefer.

Make-up Policy:

Any assignments or exams that you might miss for an approved, documented reason can be made up by arranging a retake or resubmission with me personally. Papers turned in after the deadline will be docked one letter grade for each day of tardiness. Unexcused exam retakes will be held on May 15, 2016.*

*Just kidding. There is no unexcused exam retake.

UF Policies:

University Policy on Accommodating Students with Disabilities: Students requesting accommodation for disabilities must first register with the Dean of Students Office (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the instructor when requesting accommodation. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting

assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

University Policy on Academic Misconduct: Academic honesty and integrity are fundamental values of the University community. Students should be sure that they understand the UF Student Honor Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/students.php>.

**Netiquette: Communication Courtesy: All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats.

Getting Help:

For issues with technical difficulties for E-learning in Sakai or Canvas, please contact the UF Help Desk at:

- Learning-support@ufl.edu
- (352) 392-HELP - select option 2
- <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>

****** Any requests for make-ups due to technical issues **MUST** be accompanied by the ticket number received from LSS when the problem was reported to them. The ticket number will document the time and date of the problem. You **MUST** e-mail your instructor within 24 hours of the technical difficulty if you wish to request a make-up.

Other resources are available at <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/getting-help> for:

- Counseling and Wellness resources
- Disability resources
- Resources for handling student concerns and complaints
- Library Help Desk support

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction and Course Description

- January 7- Introduction and rundown of syllabus, reading assignments and procedures
- January 9-*discussion*: Columbian exchange, mapping your favorite foods.

Week 2: The pre-Colombian exchange: Indigenous foodways in the Americas

- January 12- Bison meat, the “three sisters,” and corn’s entrada: pre-contact food production, distribution, and consumption.
- January 14- Food as ritual in native life
- January 16-*discussion*: perceptions of the native diet.

Week 3: The Colonizer and the Kernelized: Food’s Role in the “conquest.”

- January 19- no class: HOLIDAY, **book review selection due via e-learning.**

- January 21- Barbeques and Cannibals, Importance of corn to European “success” in the New World, Sugar and Slavery.
- January 23- *discussion*: Food and the shaping of colonial worlds.

Week 4: “Come Over and Help Us:” Eating in the Early Colonies

- January 26- Feasting, Fasting, and their connotations. New England, Virginia Lowcountry (Wallach and Swindall, 30-31, 46)
- January 28: Menus of Colonial Latin America: who ate what, why, and where it came from. Louisiana, Mexico, and the Caribbean.
- January 30: *discussion*: provision grounds, augmenting the diet of oppression

Week 5: Creole Cuisine: Food and Identity in the 18th century.

- February 2- The marketplace: food as symbolism and identity in the public space, distinction.
- February 4- Forces combined, or culinary coup?: wild tastes and culinary creolization.
- February 6- *discussion*: taste and power

Week 6: Manifest Destiny: Eating and American Expansion

- February 9- nature turns a mart: conceptions of the earth as a productive commodity
- February 11- the mysterious west: buffalo, cattle, supply chains, and boosterism
- February 13- *discussion*: food’s place in historical narratives.

Week 7: Hog Meat and Hominy: Food in the Old South

- February 16- Diets and disparity in the South, food in the enslaved community, willful/unconscious cultural intermingling.
- February 18- segregated eating. reiterate distinction: dividing the eating population.
- February 20- *discussion*: prejudice at the dining table

Week 8: Into the Melting Pot: Migration, Industrialization, and the urban eater.

- February 23- Irish and Italian immigration in the northeast and New Orleans. Chinese and Indian Laborers in the Americas, Hispanic and Latino culinary diaspora.
- February 25- Drinking and class
- February 27- **Mid-Term Exam**

Week 9: Spring Break

Week 10: Victory Garden: “Patriotic Eating” during the World Wars

- March 9- WWI- supporting a reluctant army with liberty cabbage.

- March 11- WWII- victory gardens, the homefront, and the social pressures of food choice.
- March 13- *discussion*: food's role in the creation of nationalism.

Week 11: Desegregation, the Consumer Revolution and Comestibles: Civil Rights, Consumerism, and the Rise of Fast Food

- March 16- The Great Migration, "soul food," and lunch counter activism.
- March 18- Consumer revolution: Suburban Ideals, Food Advertising and the reflection of cultural desire. **Book Review Due**
- March 20- *discussion*: food as a commodity, food as a means of protest.

Week 12: How the better half eats: Haute Cuisine and Food Tourism

- March 23- Haute Cuisine, food hierarchy, and Luxury foods.
- March 25- Eat like a native: "ethnic cuisines" and consuming "authenticity."
- March 27- *discussion*: eating as a necessity vs. eating as experience

Week 13: Globalization, agribusiness, and the GMO

- March 30- Second nature: human control over the edible environment?
- April 1- the ethics of eating: modern food supply, the state, and the global economy
- April 3- *discussion*: where does your food REALLY come from?

Week 14: Counterrevolutions: Alternatives to the Fast Food Nation

- April 6- "Health Food:" Vegetarianism and veganism,
- April 8- "artisanal" revolution and the local food movement
- April 10- *discussion*: activism through food choice?

Week 15: Gender and the American Appetite

- April 13- like mama used to make: gendered perceptions of nostalgic food
- April 15- Eat your way to a better you: dietary reform and marketing food to an overweight America
- April 17- *discussion*: diet and self image

Week 16: the Present and Future of Food

- April 20- Contemporary politics of food: food stereotypes, food deserts, dietary inequality, resource depletion.
- April 22- **Potlatch, Food Journals Due**
- April 24- no discussion: Reading Day

Week 17: **Final Exam**

date & time TBD

Disclaimer: This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.