History 5110-00, Studies in U.S. History: Food and Identity in U.S. History
Fall 2018
Thursdays 2:00-4:50, Wooten Hall 262

Instructor: Dr. Jennifer Jensen Wallach
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Office hours: Thursdays 1:00-2:00 and by appointment

Course Description
Students will gain familiarity both with cutting edge work in the field of US food studies while also being exposed to some classical work/thinkers in this field. The texts we will read represent a wide variety of methodologies and styles, and we will spend a great deal of time analyzing how these texts were constructed. If there is one unifying theme for all of the reading material, it is that of identity construction. In one fashion or another, each author looks at how human beings use foods to create ideas about who they are who they would like to become. Throughout the semester we will think about food practices in relationship to a wide variety of identity categories, including somewhat concrete—albeit constructed ones—like nationality, race, ethnicity, and gender, along with somewhat more amorphous concepts including attempts to create food personas that are, among other things, “ethical,” “modern,” “powerful,” or “pure.”

Students will write weekly, critical essays about the reading assignments, make one class presentation about a significant food studies book, and design a research project related to their particular area of historical study.

Required Reading
Carol J. Adams, Burger
Camille Bégin, Taste of the Nation: The New Deal Search for America’s Food
Angela Jill Cooley, To Live and Dine in Dixie: The Evolution of Urban Food Culture in the Jim Crow South
Megan J. Elias, Food on the Page: Cookbooks and American Culture
Matt Garcia, E. Melanie Dupuis, and Don Mitchell, eds., Food Across Borders
Krishnendu Ray, The Ethnic Restaurateur
Kendra Smith-Howard, Pure and Modern Milk: An Environmental History since 1900
Steve Striffler, Chicken: The Dangerous Transformation of America’s Favorite Food
Adam Shprintzen, The Vegetarian Crusade: The Rise of an American Reform Movement, 1817-1921
Katharina Vester, A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities
Psyche Williams-Forson, Building Houses Out of Chicken Legs: Black Women, Food, and Power
Various additional reading assignments will be posted to Blackboard.
Assignments and Grades

10 essays discussing class readings (25 points each) — 250 points
Presentation over external reading — 50 points
Research proposal and bibliography — 100 points

400 points total

Grading Scale: 360-400=A; 320-359=B; 280-319=C

Essays
You will write essays about 10 out of 11 weekly reading assignments. You may choose which week you want to skip. (The week you do not write a paper, you will still be expected to have read the material and be prepared to participate in the class discussion.) Please see the syllabus below for due dates and reading assignments.

Your essays should be relatively short (3 to 5 pages, double spaced, 12 point font), assertive, and well organized. They should engage each of the reading assignments (usually one book and one article) and should be analytical in nature rather than offering mere summaries of what you read. Write about the methods, argument, critical viewpoint, and sources used by each author. Evaluate the effectiveness and significance of the text. As the semester progresses, feel free to make linkages between other texts you have read as your familiarity with the field of food studies grows. You may use either footnotes or parenthetical citations in these essays.

At the end of your essay, please include two discussion questions, which you should be prepared to share with the rest of the class.

Presentation Over External Reading
During the course of the semester, you will be responsible for reading one extra book and for making a 25-30 minute presentation to the class about the contents of the book. You should convey and evaluate the argument(s) of the book. You should also analyze the methodology employed and evaluate the source material used. You should create and distribute a handout to the class that encapsulates your analysis of the book. Be sure that during your presentation you put the book that you were assigned into conversation with the general reading for that day.

Final Paper
Your final paper will be a proposal for a food studies research project that is related to your primary area(s) of historical interest, whether construed in geographical, methodological, or thematic terms. Basically, I am asking you to write something akin to a thesis or dissertation prospectus and to craft a detailed plan that you could later expand into a longer text. You will need to conduct enough research that you are familiar with the existing secondary and primary materials related to your subject and are able to craft good research questions and some preliminary (albeit tentative) conclusions. (During the course of the semester, we will visit both
the UNT and the TWU libraries, where you will receive instruction about conducting research as well as some exposure to potential sources.) There is no strict length requirement, but your summary of your research questions, research plan, and tentative thesis should be **no shorter than 5 pages plus an extensive bibliography.**

You should be prepared to make a 10-minute long presentation where you briefly describe your research question and sources to the rest of the class on December 6.

**Late work/ missed assignments:**
One of the purposes of graduate school is to learn how to function like a professional historian. Please do not take deadlines or reading assignments lightly because I do not and will not grant extensions except in the case of dire emergencies. Please do not ask for the grade of “Incomplete” except under exceptional and well-documented circumstances.

**Attendance**
This is a graduate level class, and **class attendance and participation are required.** We are all collectively responsible for making sure that this class is a rewarding and enriching experience for everyone. Your presence and your input matter a great deal. Consequently, I will lower the final grades of students who have any unexcused absences or who fail to participate regularly in class discussions.

**Schedule**

**Week 1**
August 30—Introduction to the course; sign up for presentations

**Week 2**
September 6—**Essay #1 Due**
Common Reading: Katharina Vester, *A Taste of Power: Food and American Identities*;

Audio Clip: Alice B. Toklas talks about her recipe for hash brownies, 6 minutes

Companion Text: James McWilliams, *A Revolution in Eating: How the Quest for Food Shaped America*
Presenter: _____________________________

**Week 3**
September 13— **Essay #2 Due**
Common Reading: Megan J. Elias, *Food on the Page: Cookbooks and American Culture*;

Film: *Fannie’s Last Supper*, 55 minutes
Companion Text: Charlotte Biltekoff, *Eating Right in America: The Cultural Politics of Food and Health*
Presenter: ________________________________

**Week 4**
September 20—**Essay #3 Due**

Library Visit: 3:30pm How to Use the Library at UNT to Conduct Food Studies Research, Pamela Andrews, Willis Library 136

**Week 5**
September 27—**Essay #4 Due**

Short Film: “Prices Unlimited,” 1944, Office of War Information, 11 minutes

Companion Text: Amy Bentley, *Eating for Victory: Food Rationing and the Politics of Domesticity*
Presenter: ________________________________

**Week 6**
October 4—**Essay #5 Due**


Presenter: ________________________________

**Week 8**
October 11—Tour of TWU Cookbook Collection, Kimberly L. Johnson, Director of Special Collections

We will meet at the TWU library at 2:30. I will give more detailed instructions about where to meet and where to park closer to that date.
**Week 9**
October 18—**Essay #6 Due**

Short Film: The Glamorous Housewife Makes Perfection Salad, 7 minutes

Companion Text: Laura Shapiro, *Perfection Salad: Woman and Cooking at the Turn of the Century*

Presenter: ____________________________

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**Week 10**
October 25—**Essay #7 Due**

Short Film: “Dora Charles Puts Her Foot in It,” by Joe York, Southern Foodways Alliance, 4 minutes

Companion Text: Marcie Cohen Ferris, *The Edible South: The Power of Food and the Making of an American Region*

Presenter: ____________________________

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**Week 11**
November 1—**Essay #8 Due**

Short Film: Keeley Steenson, “Mama Sugar,” Foodways Texas, 11 minutes

Companion Text: Jennifer Jensen Wallach, ed. *Dethroning the Deceitful Pork Chop: Rethinking African American Foodways from Slavery to Obama*

Presenter: ____________________________

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**Week 12**
November 8—**Essay #9 Due**

Short Film: Nicole Du Bois and Ava Lowrey, “Vishwesh Bhatt: The South I Love,” Southern Foodways Alliance, 7 minutes

Companion Text: Andrew Haley, *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the Middle Class*

Presenter: ________________________________

**Week 13**

November 15—**Essay #10 Due**


Short Film: Center for Documentary Projects, “Rolling Delta Tamales,” Southern Foodways Alliance, 5 minutes

Companion Text: Jeffery Pilcher, *Planet Taco: A Global History of Mexican Food*

Presenter: ________________________________

Companion Text: Robert Ji-Song Ku, Martin F. Manalansan, and Anita Mannur, eds. *Eating Asian American: A Food Studies Reader*

Presenter: ________________________________

**Week 14**

November 22—NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

**Week 15**

November 29—**Essay #11 Due**


Short Film: Mercy for Animals, “Undercover at Tyson Slaughterhouse,” 3 minutes


Presenter: ________________________________
Companion Text: Harvey Levenstein, *A Fear of Food: A History of Why We Worry about What We Eat*  
Presenter: _____________________________

**Week 16**  
December 6—Presentations

**Final Paper Due Via Email by 5pm on December 12, 2018**