HIST 4495, United States Food History  
MW 3:30-4:50, CHEM 253  
Fall 2016

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Office hours: Wednesdays 10:00-12:00 and by appointment

Course Description/ Course Goals
Anthropologists and folklorists have long considered documenting foodways to be an important part of their attempts to understand the inner workings of various cultures. More recently, historians have begun to pay serious attention to the relationship between foods and food practices and our understanding of the past. Like everything else, food has a history. Some recent studies have concentrated on the way that various food items—salt, oysters, and potatoes among others—have shaped the course of history as these items were sought after, transplanted, and consumed.

In this course, we will pay some attention to the specific histories of various food items—when and where they were produced and eaten. However, our primary emphasis will be on the relationship between food and culture. Our perspective will be interpretive as we look for meanings embedded in various food practices, using the culinary sphere as a lens for gaining a better understanding of the cultural history of vanished times and places.

The overarching theme of this course will be that of “identity.” Nineteenth century French gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin famously declared, “Tell me what you eat, and I’ll tell you who you are.” Food practices are used to denote racial, ethnic, and regional backgrounds; class positions and aspirations; and political and religious ideologies. As we survey American food history from the colonial era through the present, we will pay particular attention to what food practices can tell us about evolving ideas about American identity.

Our examination of the history of food will inevitably also lead us to the present and to the future. Students will be encouraged to think critically about their own food practices and what their behavior tells them about their own values and individual histories. We will use our knowledge to look to the foodways of the future. What changes do we see in American consumption patterns and in attitudes towards foods over time? What challenges, dangers, and exciting promises do we see in the future of American food and eating?

Required Texts
Charlotte Biltekoff, Eating Right in America: The Cultural Politics of Food and Health  
Peter Singer and Jim Mason, The Ethics of What We Eat: Why Our Food Choices Matter  
Jennifer Jensen Wallach and Lindsey R. Swindall, American Appetites: A Documentary Reader  
Other readings will be posted to Blackboard

Class Format
The ethos of the class will be participatory and collaborative. Students are expected to have come to class having completed the assigned reading and ready to participate. The success of the class will depend on the intellectual collaboration of the entire group.
Grades and Assignments

Three tests— (50 points each) 150 points
Five Reading Quizzes (10 points each)—50 points
Cookbook Analysis Paper—100 points
Food Reflection Journal—100 points

Total points: 400

Grades:
360-400 = A
320-359 = B
280-319 = C
240-279 = D

Tests and Quizzes
You will take three tests covering the lectures, reading assignments, and films viewed in class. In the class period before each test, I will give you some tips for how to best prepare for it.

Reading Quizzes
You will take five reading quizzes worth ten points each. See the syllabus for the schedule.

Cookbook Analysis Paper
You will write a 5-6 page paper analyzing a cookbook written before 1975 as a historical resource. Further guidelines for this assignment will be distributed later.

Food History Journal
Throughout the semester, you will keep a food history reflection journal, which will be due during the final exam period and will serve as your final examination. You should write in the journal every week, and you should turn in at least 15 pages (typed, 12 point font, double-spaced) at the end of the semester. You should use the journal to reflect about what you ate during the week (connecting your choices to issues we discuss in the class) and/ or to reflect upon the readings, films, and lectures. You may write informally, but you should pay attention to issues of grammar and spelling. Your journal should be analytical, striving not only to summarize what you ate, read, or heard but also to evaluate those things.

Late/ Missed Quizzes or Assignments and Attendance
I will allow you to make up tests and quizzes only if arrangements are made in advance and proper documentation explaining your absence is provided. Please do not ask me to make exceptions to this or any other stated policy. Out of fairness to the entire class, I must strictly adhere to the rules stated on this syllabus.

I will accept the cookbook analysis paper up to one week late for a one letter grade penalty. I will not accept it after October 19.

I will not offer any extensions for the reflection journals. Wednesday, December 14 is the absolute deadline. I will not accept the reflection journals via email.

How to Reach Me
Please always feel free to come and see me during my office hours if you have any comments, questions, or concerns. E-mail is the best way to reach me to set up an appointment or to ask a quick question.

Special Needs
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with an accommodation letter to
be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

**Academic Honesty**

Students are expected to strictly adhere to the UNT Student Code of Conduct, which prohibits lying, cheating, and plagiarism. Honor code violations may result in a failing grade for an assignment on the first offense. The second offense will result in failure of the course.

Please be particularly careful to avoid plagiarism—taking credit for another person’s intellectual property without giving her proper credit.

The American Historical Association’s “Statement on Professional Conduct” defines plagiarism in the following way:

“The word *plagiarism* derives from Latin roots: *plagiarius*, an abductor, and *plagiare*, to steal. **The expropriation of another author’s work, and the presentation of it as one’s own, constitutes plagiarism and is a serious violation of the ethics of scholarship.** It seriously undermines the credibility of the plagiarist, and can do irreparable harm to a historian’s career.

In addition to the harm that plagiarism does to the pursuit of truth, it can also be an offense against the literary rights of the original author and the property rights of the copyright owner... **The real penalty for plagiarism is the abhorrence of the community of scholars.**

Plagiarism includes more subtle abuses than simply expropriating the exact wording of another author without attribution. Plagiarism can also include the limited borrowing, without sufficient attribution, of another person’s distinctive and significant research findings or interpretations. Of course, historical knowledge is cumulative, and thus in some contexts—such as textbooks, encyclopedia articles, broad syntheses, and certain forms of public presentation—the form of attribution, and the permissible extent of dependence on prior scholarship, citation, and other forms of attribution will differ from what is expected in more limited monographs. As knowledge is disseminated to a wide public, it loses some of its personal reference. What belongs to whom becomes less distinct. But even in textbooks a historian should acknowledge the sources of recent or distinctive findings and interpretations, those not yet a part of the common understanding of the profession. Similarly, while some forms of historical work do not lend themselves to explicit attribution (e.g., films and exhibitions), every effort should be made to give due credit to scholarship informing such work.

Plagiarism, then, takes many forms. The clearest abuse is the use of another’s language without quotation marks and citation. More subtle abuses include the appropriation of concepts, data, or notes all disguised in newly crafted sentences, or reference to a borrowed work in an early note and then extensive further use without subsequent attribution. Borrowing unexamined primary source references from a secondary work without citing that work is likewise inappropriate. All such tactics reflect an unworthy disregard for the contributions of others.

No matter what the context, the **best professional practice for avoiding a charge of plagiarism is always to be explicit, thorough, and generous in acknowledging one’s intellectual debts.**”

(See: http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/professionalstandards.cfm#Plagiarism)
If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism while you are in the process of writing your final exam, see me. *In the past I have had to assign failing grades to students for plagiarism; I do not want this to happen again.*

**Schedule** — Please note that the schedule is subject to change. Students are expected to attend class regularly and to be aware of any changes.

**Week 1: The Emergence of a Multicultural Cuisine**
**August 29** — Introduction; How to Analyze a Primary Sources

**August 31** — Lecture: Colonial Culinary Encounters and the Emergence of a Multiracial Cuisine  
Discussion/ Read: *American Appetites*, Chapter 2, “Olaudah Equiano Describes the Food of Seventeenth Century Igbo” “Alexander Falconbridge Describes the Food of the Middle Passage,” “Colonial Advertisement Offering Slaves for Sale Who had Experience Cultivating Rice,” Wahunsonacocok Advises the English Residents of Jamestown Not to Steal Food from Native Americans,” “Captain John Smith Describes the Starving Time of 1609-1610”

**Week 2: The Historical and Cultural Significance of Thanksgiving**
**September 5** — No class

**September 7** — Lecture: The History of the Thanksgiving Holiday and Early Modern Ideas about Healthful Eating  

**Week 3: Thanksgiving and Food Symbolism**
**September 12** — Film: *What’s Cooking?* (109 minutes; 2000)

**September 14** — *What’s Cooking?*  
Discussion/ Read: Lisa Jordan and Elizabeth S.D. Engelhardt, “The Perilous Whiteness of Pumpkins,” to be posted to Blackboard  
Be prepared to discuss the symbolism of your Thanksgiving (or other significant holiday) menu

**Week 4: Critical Nutrition Studies/ Food and the Founding**
Reading Quiz #1  
Cookbook Analysis Paper Guidelines Distributed

**September 21** — Lecture: Food and the Founding  

**Week 5: Test #1/ Food and the Expanding American Empire**
**September 26** — Test #1

**September 28** — Lecture: The Food of the Louisiana Purchase and Westward Expansion

**Week 6: Immigration and Foodways/ Technology and Food**

**October 3** Lecture: Foodways and Immigration

**October 5**—Lecture: Technology and Taste
Reading: Shane Hamilton, “The Twentieth Century” reading to be posted to Blackboard
Reading Quiz #2

**Week 7: Industrial Foods**

**October 10** Lecture: The Ascendency of Industrial Foods

**October 12**— No Class Today
Cookbook analysis papers are due in the box on my office door (Wooten Hall 247) by 5pm

**Week 8: Decadence and Pragmatic Food Reform in the Nineteenth Century**

**October 17** — Film: *Fannie’s Last Supper*

**October 19** — Lecture: Booker T. Washington and Food Reform at Tuskegee
Discussion/ Read: *American Appetites*, Chapter 7, “A Cooking Class at Carlisle Indian School, 1901”

**Week 9: Nineteenth Century Food Reformers/ Shprintzen Lecture**

**October 24**— Lecture: Nineteenth Century Food Reformers
Read: “The Nineteenth Century,” Adam D. Shprintzen reading to be posted on Blackboard

**October 26**—We will not have a regular class meeting today. We will meet as a class on Thursday, October 27 at 4:30 to listen to a lecture by Adam Shprintzen (location TBA). If you cannot attend, please see me for alternative assignment.

Please write a one page reaction to Shprintzen’s lecture and bring it to class on 10/31. This response will count for Quiz # 3.

**Week 10: Domestic Science/ Test #2**

**October 31**— Lecture: Outsourcing the Domestic Sphere

**November 2**— Test #2

**Week 11: Food and Evolving Gender Roles**

**November 7**—The Invention of the Domestic Scientist
Discussion/ Read: Biltekoff, Chapter 2 “Scientific Moralization and the Beginning of Dietary Reform”

**November 9**— Lecture: Women on the World War II Food Front
Discussion/ Read: Biltekoff, Chapter 3 “Anxiety and Aspiration on the Nutrition Front”

**Week 12: Evolving Gender Roles, Cont./ Food and Race**

**November 14**— Lecture: The Idealized Housewife Confronts Convenience Food
Discussion/Read: *American Appetites*, Chapter 9, “New Appliances, 1950s,” “Condiment Production,” “Convenience Food Recipes”

**November 16**—Lecture: African-Americans and Food Stereotypes
Discussion/Read: Jennifer Jensen Wallach, “Food and Race” reading to be posted to Blackboard

**Week 13: Food and Race Continued**
**November 21**—Lecture: Ambivalent Attitudes about Chinese American Food and the Appropriation of Mexican Cuisine
Discussion/Read: *American Appetites*, Chapter 4, “Song About John Chinaman, 1850s;” Chapter 7, “Pearl Idelia Ellis Argues that Dietary Reform Can Aid in Assimilation and End Crime,”

**November 23**—No class.

**Week 14: Contemporary Food Issues**
**November 28**—Lecture: Nutritional Guidelines and Changing Ideas about the Healthy Body
**Reading Quiz #4**

**November 30**—Lecture: The Politics of Food
Read/Discussion: *The Ethics of What We Eat*
**Reading Quiz #5**

**Week 15: Test #3/Conclusion**
**December 5**—Test #3

**December 7**—Be prepared to share something from your food history reflection journal. Closing thoughts.

**Food Reflection Journal due in my office Wooten 247 by 3:30 pm Wednesday, December 14. Please note: I will not accept reflection journals late. I will not accept reflection journals via email.**