

Sociology 169F: Cultural Perspectives of Food Fall 2018

INSTRUCTOR

Jill Bakehorn

E-mail: jabakehorn@berkeley.edu

Office: 479 Barrows Hall

Sign-up Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-2:00pm

Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xjanb>

Drop-in Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:30-2:00pm

CLASS MEETING

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays 3:00-3:59pm
101 Morgan Hall

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide a broad overview of food as culture. Food has more meaning than mere sustenance and we will explore how food can also nourish us culturally and socially. Food itself is a social construction; how and what is defined as suitable to eat is socially determined and subject to change. What is acceptable as food in one culture can be taboo in another. Food reflects a culture's values and is a way one culture asserts its superiority over another.

We will begin the course by examining some foundational writings on the cultural implications and explanations of food:

- How and why we consume what we do
- How food is used to create distinctions

We will use these foundations to explore how food is imbued with gender, race, class, and even moral meanings and can form the basis for the constitution of identities and social relationships. Food is also connected to political ideologies that inform social movements including the slow food movement, organic food, and even punk culture.

What role does food preparation and cooking play in turning food from raw materials into culture? We eat food to nourish our bodies, which can be a source of a great deal of pleasure, but it can also be a source of anxiety. How does our body image impact our relationship to food? What about disease caused, at least partly, by what we consume?

What role do globalization and capitalism have on our food cultures and ways of life?

We will also examine how industrially-produced white bread in the U.S. demonstrates the complex social and political meanings and uses of food, like the construction of purity and germs; the reproduction of gender norms; the marginalization of immigrants; imperial ambitions and dominance; and the class-based meanings and ideologies of food.

Keep in mind this is a sociology course. Just to refresh your memory, sociology is the study of human social activity, organization, and interaction. Sociology is about the search for patterned behavior and social, rather than individual, explanations for this behavior. Sociologists look beyond the taken-for-granted notions of our social environment to examine the many layers of social meaning in the human experience. (If this doesn't sound familiar to you, or you are unclear about the *sociological perspective*, please refer to your introductory sociology text for a refresher.)

This course challenges many taken-for-granted assumptions about the social world. Keep in mind that your personal experiences may not match the general sociological insights discussed in the course. This does not negate the insights. Ask yourself why this might be the case. You may not agree with everything we read and discuss, but I expect you to have an open mind and demonstrate your knowledge of the sociological perspective. Disagreements and debates are expected and welcome in this class; however, I will not tolerate personal attacks.

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the semester you should be able to:

- ❖ Discuss sociological theories of consumption practices
- ❖ Connect sociological theories to the social world and your experiences
- ❖ Use an intersectional approach
- ❖ Critically analyze media/“common sense” understandings of food
- ❖ Write succinct papers that effectively synthesize course materials and apply theory

REQUIRED TEXTS

Counihan, Carole and Penney Van Esterick, eds. 2012. *Food and Culture: A Reader*, 3rd ed. New York: Routledge.

Bobrow-Strain, Aaron. 2013. *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Course Reader: Available at Copy Central (2411 Telegraph) and on bCourses. Books are on reserve at Moffitt Library and may be available online—check the library website.

ASSIGNMENTS

Reflections: You will complete two reflections. Each is worth 15% of your final grade. Due dates are listed under “Course Outline.” These assignments are an opportunity to apply the course concepts and insights into your own experience of food and eating.

Exams: You will complete two take-home exams. Exams will cover all materials in the course: lectures, readings, and any media presented in class. Each is worth 30% of your final grade. Due dates are listed under “Course Outline.”

Food Journals/Participation: Participation is 10% of your final grade. You can earn full participation points by asking and answering questions in class, completing random, unannounced writing assignments in class, and posting questions/comments/content on bCourses in the Discussion board.

You will be asked to keep a food journal throughout the semester and critically examine your consumption practices in light of the themes of the course: distinction, identity, ideologies, bodies, health, globalization/colonialism, authenticity, and activism. I will post specific questions or themes for you to explore.

Discussion Questions: Part of your participation grade will consist of discussion questions written by you and uploaded to bCourses prior to the designated discussion classes. The due dates can be found under “Assignments” on bCourses. You must upload questions **two times** during the semester.

Consider questions that the reading materials raise for you, but don’t simply pose reading comprehension questions. For instance: Can you make connections to other readings? What did you feel the author could have addressed but didn’t?

You can explore questions directly related to readings, but feel free to go beyond to touch on other topics. Keep tabs on news stories related to issues of food and culture and tie these back to course topics. Feel free to upload videos, web links, etc. to supplement your questions.

The idea is to suggest topics that will spark productive and engaging discussions in class.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Reflections: 30%

Exams: 60%

Food Journals/Participation: 10%

GRADE SCALE

Grade Range		Grade
100%	97%	A+
96%	93%	A
92%	90%	A-
89%	87%	B+
86%	83%	B
82%	80%	B-
79%	77%	C+
76%	73%	C
72%	70%	C-
69%	67%	D+
66%	63%	D
62%	60%	D-
59%	0%	F

COURSE FORMAT AND POLICIES

Readings: Readings should be completed prior to class. You must keep up with the readings to participate in class discussions and complete assignments. Bring your reading materials to every class; you will likely need to refer to them in class discussions.

All of your assigned readings (aside from the required books) are available on bCourses and as a reader at Copy Central on Telegraph.

Participation: This class will incorporate the use of lecture, films, music, visuals, and group discussions. I expect you to be an active participant in the course. Bring your questions and comments to class and don't be shy about bringing them up.

I will give unannounced writing assignments to be completed in class. These are an important component of your participation grade.

You can also participate by posting links to news stories or videos, as well as any relevant thoughts on issues related to gender in the chatroom or discussion board on bCourses. Be sure to contextualize any posts by connecting them to issues in the class. Provide **trigger warnings** where appropriate.

If you have a question about the readings, lecture, etc., please post your question to the chatroom or discussion board on bCourses where both your questions and my answers will be visible to other students, rather than e-mailing me. Feel free to answer each other's questions as well.

Missing Class: If you miss a class, do not ask me if you missed anything. Of course you did!--but don't expect me to fill you in. I suggest sharing contact information with a classmate early on in the semester and getting the notes you missed.

Course Slides: I use course slides which often incorporate media. I will post course slides, but they will only contain the text. Keep in mind that these slides are meant to be a guide during lecture and are therefore not exhaustive or a substitute for attending class.

Course Notes and Recordings: Course notes should not be disseminated. That means you are forbidden from posting them online on forums like Course Hero. You must obtain permission from me to record lectures.

Course Etiquette: Do not read, listen to music, browse the Internet, text, or sleep during class. If you want to do these things, don't bother coming to class. All **phones** must be silenced and put away during class.

Laptop Policy: I strongly encourage you to take notes without a computer if you are able. If you need to use a computer during class, I ask that you **sit in the back four rows of the classroom** so that you do not distract and disturb other students.

Email: Clearly indicate to which class you are referring in your emails to me. I endeavor to respond to emails within 24 hours, but this is not always possible; please be patient.

GRADING POLICIES

No **late assignments** will be accepted without prior approval.

Turnitin: All of your assignments will be checked by TurnItIn for plagiarism. Keep in mind, this program keeps a database of previously turned in papers as well.

Be sure to carefully consider assignment feedback; it is provided to help you improve on future assignments. For in-text feedback, **click on the link "View Feedback"** which may not be visible if you are not in full-screen mode.

If you would like to request a re-grade or re-evaluation of an assignment, you must first, wait 24 hours after the assignment was returned and second, write up a statement detailing why you believe you deserve a higher grade. This statement should be about the substance of your work, not about effort. Be sure to make specific reference to your work, don't simply say that you responded to the questions asked. Demonstrate how you did so.

You must request a re-grade within 7 days of the assignment being returned. My assessment and grade of your work will be used, even if that means you get a lower score than originally given for that work.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The University defines academic misconduct as “any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community” (UC Berkeley Code of Student Conduct).

Academic dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism. Cheating is collaboration with other students on response papers and exams. Plagiarism includes turning in any work that is not your own as well as improper or missing citations of others' works. As a student of the University of California, you are bound by the Code of Academic Conduct. Any cases of cheating or plagiarism will result in a referral to The Center for Student Conduct and a zero for that assignment.

Plagiarism is most likely to occur because students are unaware of how to cite their sources or because they feel desperate. If you get to this point in your writing, contact me ASAP rather than doing something you'll very likely regret.

OFFICE HOURS

Sign-up office hours: from 12:30-2:00pm on **Mondays**. Sign-up: <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/xjanb>

Drop-in office hours: 12:30-2:00pm on **Wednesdays** —no appointment necessary.

If you are having any difficulties with the material or assignments for the course or if you are having any personal problems that are affecting your ability to complete assignments on time, you should take advantage of office hours early in the semester. I will be much more amenable to granting extensions when I have been made aware of problems early on rather than at the last minute.

Remember that office hours are an important resource if for no other reason than getting to know your instructors could help you in the future when you may need letters of recommendation.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Disability Accommodations

Please let me know early in the semester if you qualify for any disability accommodations.

Student Learning Center

“The primary academic support service for students at Berkeley, the SLC helps students transition to Cal; navigate the academic terrain; create networks of resources; and achieve academic, personal and professional goals.” Located in The Cesar Chavez Student Center on Lower Sproul Plaza. Front desk phone: 510 642 7332

Sexual Harassment and Violence Support Services

To learn more about these issues, how to support survivors, or how to file a report and receive support services, start here: <http://survivorsupport.berkeley.edu>. **Please note that I am not a confidential advocate.** To speak to a confidential care advocate: <http://sa.berkeley.edu/dean/confidential-care-advocate/>

Economic, Food, and Housing Support

If you are in need of economic, food, or housing support, you can find help at basicneeds.berkeley.edu. You may be eligible for money to buy groceries via calfresh.berkeley.edu or our [Food Assistance Program](#). If you are in need of food immediately, please visit our UC Berkeley Food Pantry at pantry.berkeley.edu/.

COURSE OUTLINE Readings are to be **completed** on the day listed below. Schedule is subject to change.

WEEKS ONE-THREE: FOUNDATIONAL CULTURAL THEMES

Wednesday, 8/22 **Introductions**

Friday, 8/24 **Food and Culture**

Carole Counihan and Penney Van Esterik: “Why Food? Why Culture? Why Now?” in
Food and Culture: A Reader

Monday, 8/27 **Theories of Food Consumption**

Margaret Mead: “Why Do We Overeat?” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Roland Barthes: “Toward a Psychosociology of Contemporary Food Consumption” in
Food and Culture: A Reader

Wednesday, 8/29 Food as Distinction

Pierre Bourdieu: “Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Friday, 8/31 Food as Distinction

Claude Lévi-Strauss: “The Culinary Triangle” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Mary Douglas: “The Abominations of Leviticus” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Monday, 9/3 HOLIDAY: NO CLASS

Wednesday, 9/5 The Food Revolution

Finn, S. Margot. 2017. “Chapter 1: Incompatible Standards: The Four Ideals of the Food Revolution.” Pp 18-49 in *Discriminating Taste: How Class Anxiety Created the American Food Revolution*. Newark, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Friday, 9/7 Food, Status Anxiety, and Class

Finn, S. Margot. 2017. “Chapter 2: Aspirational Eating: Food and Status Anxiety in the Gilded Age and the Progressive Era.” Pp 49-79 in *Discriminating Taste: How Class Anxiety Created the American Food Revolution*. Newark, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

WEEKS FOUR-FIVE: FOOD AND IDENTITY

Monday, 9/10 Popular Culture and Identity

Wednesday, 9/12

T.J.M. Holden: “The Overcooked and the Underdone: Masculinities in Japanese Food Programming” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Rebecca Swenson: “Domestic Divo? Televised Treatments of Masculinity, Femininity, and Food” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Friday, 9/14 Discussion Session

****REFLECTION 1 DUE****

Monday, 9/17 **Food as Ideology**

Psyche Williams-Forsion: “More than Just the “Big Piece of Chicken”: The Power of Race, Class, and Food in American Consciousness” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Wednesday, 9/19 **Reproducing Ideologies in Everyday Life**

Anne Allison: “Japanese Mothers and *Obentōs*: The Lunch-Box as Ideological State Apparatus” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Friday, 9/21 **Reproducing Ideologies in Everyday Life**

Christopher Carrington: “Feeding Lesbian Families” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Monday, 9/24 **Food as Empowerment**

Carole Counihan: “*Mexicanas*’ Food Voice and Differential Consciousness in the San Luis Valley of Colorado” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Dylan Clark: “The Raw and the Rotten: Punk Cuisine” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

WEEKS SIX-EIGHT: THE BODY AND CONSUMPTION

Wednesday, 9/26 **Body Size and Morality**

Friday, 9/28

Biltekoff, Charlotte. 2013. “Chapter Five: Thinness as Health, Self-Control, and Citizenship.” Pp 109-149 in *Eating Right in America: The Cultural Politics of Food & Health*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Monday, 10/1 **Body Image: Women**

Wednesday, 10/3

Susan Bordo: “Not Just ‘a White Girl’s Thing’: The Changing Face of Food and Body Image Problems” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Richard A. O’Connor: “De-medicalizing Anorexia: Opening a New Dialogue” in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Friday, 10/5 **Discussion Session**

Monday, 10/8 Body Image: Men

Fabio Parasecoli: “Feeding Hard Bodies: Food and Masculinities in Men’s Fitness Magazines” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Wednesday, 10/10 Food and Disease

Gary Paul Nabhan: “Rooting Out the Causes of Disease: Why Diabetes is So Common Among Desert Dwellers” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Friday, 10/12 **TAKE-HOME MIDTERM DUE******
NO CLASS

WEEK NINE: GLOBALIZATION

Monday, 10/15 Authenticity and Nation

Tulasi Srinivas: “‘As Mother Made It’: The Cosmopolitan Indian Family, ‘Authentic’ Food, and the Construction of Cultural Utopia” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Richard Wilk: “‘Real Belizean Food’: Building Local Identity in the Transnational Caribbean” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Wednesday, 10/17 Cultural Colonialism and Consumption

Lisa Heldke: “Let’s Cook Thai: Recipes for Colonialism” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Friday, 10/19 Global Food Workers

Deborah Barndt: “On the Move for Food: Three Women Behind the Tomato’s Journey” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

WEEKS TEN—ELEVEN: CAPITALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Monday, 10/22 Capitalism and Health

Alice Julier: “The Political Economy of Obesity: The Fat Pay All” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Janet Poppendieck: “Want Amid Plenty: From Hunger to Inequality” in ***Food and Culture: A Reader***

Wednesday, 10/24 The Soda Tax: Regulating Consumption

Philpott, Tom et al. 2017. "Should Progressives Support Soda Taxes?" *In These Times*.
December 20. <http://inthesetimes.com/article/20747/Up-for-Debate-Soda-Tax>

Friday, 10/26 Discussion Session

Monday, 10/29 The Slow Food Movement

Alison Leitch: "Slow Food and the Politics of 'Virtuous Globalization'" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Julie Guthman: "Fast Food/Organic Food: Reflexive Tastes and the Making of 'Yuppie Chow'" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Wednesday, 10/31 Is Slow Food Good Food for All?

Jeffrey M. Pilcher: "Taco Bell, Maseca, and Slow Food: A Postmodern Apocalypse for Mexico's Peasant Cuisine?" in *Food and Culture: A Reader*

Bowen, Sarah et al. 2014. "The Joy of Cooking?" *Contexts* 13 (3):20-25.

Friday, 11/2 Catch-Up/Review

WEEKS TWELVE-FIFTEEN: WHITE BREAD: A SOCIOPOLITICAL FOOD

Monday, 11/5 "Bread and Power"

Aaron Bobrow-Strain: "Preface" and "Introduction: Bread and Power" in *White Bread: A Social History of the Store-Bought Loaf*

Wednesday, 11/7 "Germs, Gender Roles, and 'Dirty Immigrants'"

Aaron Bobrow-Strain: "Chapter 1: Untouched by Human Hands: Dreams of Purity and Contagion" in *White Bread*

**Friday, 11/9 "Germs, Gender Roles, and 'Dirty Immigrants'" (Cont)
REFLECTION 2 DUE**

Monday, 11/12 HOLIDAY: NO CLASS

Wednesday, 11/14 "Spectacle of Modern Progress"

Aaron Bobrow-Strain: "Chapter 2: The Invention of Sliced Bread: Dreams of Control and Abundance" in *White Bread*

Friday, 11/16 **Discussion Session**

Monday, 11/19 **Avoiding White Bread**

Aaron Bobrow-Strain: “Chapter 3: The Staff of Death: Dreams of Health and Discipline”
in *White Bread*

Wednesday, 11/21 **HOLIDAY: NO CLASS**

Friday, 11/23 **HOLIDAY: NO CLASS**

Monday, 11/26 **Enriching White Bread**

Aaron Bobrow-Strain: “Chapter 4: Vitamin Bread Boot Camp: Dreams of Strength and
Defense” in *White Bread*

Wednesday, 11/28 **White Bread and White Trash**

Aaron Bobrow-Strain: “Chapter 6: How White Bread Became White Trash: Dreams of
Resistance and Status” in *White Bread*

Friday, 11/30 **Dreams of Good Food/Conclusions**

Aaron Bobrow-Strain: “Chapter 7: Conclusion: Beyond Good Bread” in *White Bread*

WEEK SIXTEEN: READING, REVIEW, AND RECITATION

MONDAY, DECEMBER 3—FRIDAY, DECEMBER 7

TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM: Due TUESDAY, DECEMBER 11 at 10:00PM